

MEAGAN HALL
DISTRICT 1 - OHIO VALLEY
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Meagan Hall Nomination

OVRs is nominating Ms. Meagan Hall for the Behind the Scenes Award. This is an out of the box nomination as Meagan is a Program Coordinator overseeing 6 homes. As a Program Coordinator Meagan does work behind the scenes, pushing forward her Home Coordinators and DSP teams to be front and center. She continuously works to build teams that understand the core foundation of their positions but have joy in their work. Having joy for one's job trickles to all you are around. Being a provider of residential services includes creating a happy home. This is every more critical as COVID19 keeps many of us home. As a Program Coordinator you can't be 6 places at once, you must continually work behind the scenes to ensure your front line workers and supervisors have the knowledge and tools needed. COVID19 has challenged us all. She had the first home at OVRs impacted by the virus. She stood strong, showing her staff that they can meet the challenge and that together they can keep all safe and healthy. She has worked with grace during this challenging time, supporting her team to be successful. Her mantra is that we can do this and we will get thru this. Meagan's top natural skill sets are bravery; fairness; honesty; leadership; judgement and creativity. Her VIA skill list defines bravery as courageous and not shrinking from challenge and acting upon conviction; leadership as getting things done and preserving harmony within the group by making everyone feel included; creativity as thinking of new ways to do things and not being content for conventional if there is a better way. She doesn't push her skill set on others but it is these natural strengths that help her deliver the above and beyond every day. Staffing and delivering client services with COVID19 is not for the weak of spirit and it is what you do behind the scenes that gives the strength during times of struggle. COVID19 shut down work for many clients. People were home, keeping their social circle small. She organized fun contests including funny hats; best Red's outfit; and flower pot crafts. Life during COVID has been constrained but Meagan has worked behind the scenes to keep all safe, healthy and happy. Thank you Meagan for all you do contributing to the success of the homes you support.

STEVE FERREE
DISTRICT 2 -
S & H PRODUCTS



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Steve Ferree Nomination

Steve is a Van Driver for S & H Products and is the epitome of going above and beyond. He works approximately 55 hours each week because he wants every individual to have opportunities in their life and Steve ensures they have transportation to do the things they want. He starts his day around 5:30am to get an individual to a community job; he works sometimes until 10:30 pm to get someone else home from a community job. It is not uncommon for him to work 7 days a week. Steve works holidays and weekends to make sure individuals employed in the community have transportation to and from work. He also acts as a natural support by picking up an individual and taking them to the church Steve and his wife attend. I can give you countless times he provided a behind the scenes support but there is one that stands out. This past year we took a group to the local radio station to record a commercial for an upcoming event. Upon arrival at the station we discovered they had a step to get in their building and did not have a ramp or any door accessible to those that utilize a wheelchair for mobility. One of the ladies in our group, who was extremely excited about recording a radio commercial, uses a very heavy power wheelchair. Steve took it upon himself to gather up a few people from the business to physically lift the lady and her power wheelchair into the building. THEN, while we were recording the commercial Steve drove back to S&H and quickly made a ramp out of wood. He brought the ramp back just as we were finishing the commercial. He put it in place and she was able to safely exit the building with all of her dignity. Steve cares about people! He will do anything for someone and never wants anything for his efforts. His driving force is doing something because it is what makes someone's life better. Everyone loves him because Steve is an absolute blessing to all who know him.

AMY ROSS
DISTRICT 3 -
MOUNT ALOYSIUS

BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Amy Ross Nomination

I would like to nominate Amy Ross for the “behind the scenes” award for her efforts highly conducive to improving the lives of those she serves on a daily basis. Amy began her career at Mount Aloysius 29 years ago, 10 of those years as a DSP and 19 as a cook. She currently leads our Dietary Department as the supervisor. You can always find Amy in the kitchen doing what she loves, cooking and working alongside her peers. Amy takes great pride in her work. She shows up to work every day with a smile on her face and ready to take on whatever challenges she faces. What many don’t know about Amy is that she has faced challenges herself. In April 2019, Amy experienced a ruptured aneurysm that nearly took her life. She was told she would be dependent on others for all her care for the rest of her life. If you know Amy then you know she is a very stubborn and determined person. She was determined to get back to work doing what she loves, so she took the bull by the horns and fought back. Amy had to relearn how to walk, talk and eat and she did just that in 5 months and was able to return to work in September 2019. Despite her struggles, she continues to win while pushing herself to improve her strength on a daily basis. Amy is living proof of perseverance and is an inspiration to those she serves and her coworkers. She is truly a great asset to Mount Aloysius.

CAROL PARCELL
DISTRICT 4 - MANAHAN



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Carol Parcell Nomination

Manahan's Director of Information Technology, Carol Parcell, is an exceptional candidate for the Behind the Scenes Award. Carol has been with our organization for 27 years, and has an incredible passion for the DD field. Although her job duties are considered behind the scenes, our organization would not be where it is today without her expertise. Carol is responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining the computer systems at Manahan, as well as training employees and upholding the integrity and security of the network. The daily endeavors that fill her to-do list serve the purpose to enhance the lives of all at Manahan. Carol's dedication to our organization does not go unnoticed, and her professional candor is admirable to all whom she surrounds. From ensuring that our network files are secure to assisting the individuals with their technology needs, Carol is truly a crucial asset to our organization. The Coronavirus is a whole new chapter in our lives, and Carol has seamlessly upheld the information technology department despite the unsettling pandemic. She never hesitates to assist other departments to ensure that the needs of the organization are attained. While Carol's day to day job responsibilities are not in direct client care, the lives of the individuals that we serve are enriched because of her commitment to our mission. Her persistent dedication to our organization is a valuable component of Manahan's structure. Carol Parcell truly goes above and beyond her outlined job responsibilities, and her passion for serving those with developmental disabilities is recognized, even behind the scenes.

JOAN LONG
DISTRICT 5 - THE SOCIETY



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Joan Long Nomination

Joan started with The Society as a volunteer to help prepare Camp Paradise for the summer camp season. What began as something to do during retirement, quickly turned into a passion. Joan was captivated by the positive impact The Society has on the lives of individuals with disabilities. She wanted to be a part of the team more permanently and accepted the position of Camp and Volunteer Coordinator. She brought the perfect blend of organization, connections, optimism and internal investment in the camp. Joan went to work immediately and had planned a large variety of wonderful activities for the 2020 Camp Paradise summer camp season. She had secured camp staff, outings, projects, volunteers, and more. Joan and the summer camp team were preparing for training when, the difficult decision was made to cancel the summer camp season due to Covid-19. Joan didn't let the pandemic get her down! Joan pivoted her focus to the physical structures at camp. She said if the campers couldn't be there this summer, they would come back next summer to a beautiful new look. She recruited volunteers to assist the maintenance team in updating camp buildings and group homes with fresh coats of paint, sprucing up outdoor locations, and providing donations to keep individuals engaged. She has worked with our current volunteer base, recruited new groups of volunteers from friends, churches, business partnerships, and provided guidance for Eagle Scout projects. Many of those who have volunteered, have also become invested in The Society, much like she did. They hear about additional needs and step up through donations of materials for individuals to remain active, monetary donations, product donations, and additional volunteer hours. Joan is always very conscientious to provide support and direction for the volunteers, and they respond with asking for more projects. During pandemic response planning, Joan jumped in and offered to prepare Camp Paradise for individuals who would need to be isolated or quarantined. She prepared and provided hazmat cleaning after isolation and quarantining at the camp. Anything that needs to be done at camp, Joan will be on it without hesitation any time of day or night. Joan has brought new awareness of The Society in the community through using her connections and sharing her passion to help others. We thank Joan for her Behind the Scenes work that makes a difference in the lives of others.

PEGGY MELVIN
DISTRICT 6 -
HEINZERLING COMMUNITY

BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Peggy Melvin Nomination

Heinzerling Memorial Foundation is nominating Peggy Melvin for the behind the scenes OPRA award. Peggy has been with Heinzerling Communities since July of 1992. Her primary position is trayline/formula room and she is responsible for preparing gastrostomy feedings. Peggy is very detail oriented. Her measurements are precise and she double checks to make sure the diet order is followed. She records temperatures of all refrigerators and notifies supervisors when there is a problem. Peggy is a very versatile employee. She will pitch in and help with other positions without being asked. Peggy's shift starts at 5a. She will help get lunches ready and coolers packed with ice for residents attending outside programming without being asked. Peggy is capable and willing to step in and help with the sack lunch routine, snack preparation, trayline and/or dishmachine operator positions. Peggy demonstrates a genuine concern for residents. She is knowledgeable about resident diets and helps to ensure accuracy of food served. She is constructive and helpful when finding mistakes of others. Peggy is safety conscious and offers suggestions to improve kitchen safety. She cleans as she goes and always leaves her work area spotless at the end of her shift. Peggy has a strong work ethic. Her attendance is excellent. Peggy often tells us to call her if we need help on her days off. She has even offered to change Personal and/or vacation days if needed. Peggy is helpful to new staff and is a good trainer. She has good communication skills and is thorough when explaining details of the job to dietary staff. Peggy volunteers at the food bank on her days off. In summary, Peggy is an asset to the department and organization. She demonstrates excellence in all areas of her job. She is dedicated to the mission of Heinzerling Communities.

JAMES PARKS, JR.
DISTRICT 7 -
NEW AVENUES TO
INDEPENDENCE



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



James Parks Nomination

Our Agency serves adults with Developmental Disabilities, and although ALL of our Caregivers are Unsung Heroes, I need to tell you about our Maintenance Man James! When COVID-19 hit, and so many things were changing, all but one of our maintenance staff faced lay-off. They were offered redeployment to other position within our agency, and James stepped up to the challenge. James was offered a position in one of our community based housing sites. Although James had no formal training in this field, he does have kindness, respect, and dependability! Which quickly earned the respect from the men that live in this home. This site houses 2 men, one which had been known to be a little challenging at times. But not for James. James offered the guidance of a father, and the comradery of a friend. The guys quickly began to look forward to James coming in for shift. James has a kind heart, you can feel his calming presence instantly. I have to admit, when my Supervisor Amie called to let me know someone from maintenance would be filling the open shifts at this site. She mentioned James loves to cook! I instantly thought, well, the fellas there love to eat and this could be what creates the connection with the guys. And I was right! But not only did he cook for the guys, he encouraged them to help in the process. And in addition to cooking, they planned out the menus, and picked up the groceries with him. He also encouraged the guys to assist with doing their own laundry, become responsible for their personal space, tend to hygiene, and they rose to the occasion! They wanted to do better. They watched movies, had talks, cracked jokes, and laughed. Oh, and I almost forgot, because he is a maintenance man by trade, he fixed things around to house. Bonus!! James was only there about 3 months, but he left a lasting impression on the guys. They ask about him and hope he may drop in to visit. We were all sad to see him go, but knew this was temporary. On James's last day at the home, I stopped by to tie up some loose ends, say goodbye, and let him know he's always a position in any house I supervise. It was truly an unexpected surprise but were all better for working with James, if only for a few months. Once James returned to his Maintenance position, he wanted to continue to work as a DSP with the guys and continues to pick up on week-ends.

HEATHER WOOLUM
DISTRICT 8 -
ECHOING HILLS



BEHIND THE SCENES STAFF AWARD



Heather Woolum

Nomination

Heather is a wonderful ambassador for Echoing Hills Village, Inc., in assisting staff, management, and the individuals we serve. She is the kind of person who gives to give. She has, on countless occasions, taken time out of her busy schedule to meet with people one-on-one to help, mentor, and just listen. Heather makes people feel seen, heard, and valued. She shows servant leadership and inspires others to give back and pay it forward. Over the past year, she has instituted a one-on-one with the leadership team in that region. The goal is for the team to be heard and supported. What's working and what isn't. It's simple but so valuable. A happy and fulfilled team delivers an optimal program for those we serve! This has aided in the realization that she has become a valuable resource to the Regional Director as well as a support system for the leadership team. Heather is helpful, caring, resourceful, and happy to offer service no matter the task. Recently, we lost a team member unexpectedly. Heather, being the helpful and caring resource that she is, offered the mother advice and gave direction on the next steps with insurance and other tasks that were unknown and overwhelming for the family. Additionally, under unfortunate circumstances, when COVID-19 impacted our Southwest Region, without a thought, Heather put on PPE and joined the frontline team right on the floor. We were experiencing a labor shortage due to the virus, her first inclination was how could she help? Her team spirit, quick wit, and loyalty to Echoing Hills have endeared her quickly to her colleagues. Heather saw the team grow weary with fatigue and fear as the virus struck two of the homes. She worked with the Region's Leadership, Corporate Leadership, and our Chaplin to arrange a time via Zoom to come together to support one another and to pray together. She is a vital member of the Recruitment and Retention Strategic Work Group and has been instrumental through her innovative approaches in both television and digital outreach to generate awareness. Heather has received the Outstanding Performance Award at Echoing Hills, and the nominator said, "Heather's drive, ambition, and dedication coupled with her professional experience is a win-win for Echoing Hills. What I'm most impressed with is Heather's initiative to think outside of the box and to be innovative in her HR practices!" She carries out the mission and has positively impacted our staff and individuals. She has made a significant contribution to Echoing Hills and projects a warm, cheerful attitude to our team and individuals. I have seen her resolve conflicts and handle difficult situations with patience and tact. She loves people, works hard, and always tries to lift the spirits of those around her. It isn't uncommon for her to make cookies and surprise the team – because she knows it is a warm and fuzzy that brings them joy!

LOTTIE SMITH
DISTRICT 1 - OHIO VALLEY
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS AWARD



Lottie Smith Nomination

Ms. Lottie Smith is a DSP of extraordinary character. She moved from working 22 hours a week to working 60-70 hours when COVID19 hit. Ms. Lottie was a lifesaver when 3 out of 6 staff and 1 client contracted COVID19. Another staff then was unexpectedly off due to a family emergency. She overcame her anxiety and fear, showing confidence as she donned new protective equipment to be at work. "I can't leave them now. The guys can't help themselves and you need help," those words were golden. Ms. Lottie's dedication was an anchor that helped keep the other 3 clients healthy. The first case hit June 9 and the final negative test came July 29. Ms. Lottie didn't waiver on her commitment, care and concern to keep everyone healthy. Few subs could be found as most kept themselves as far away as possible. When the supervisor was working double shifts, Ms. Lottie called to check in and then came to work. Again and again she demonstrated her compassion for the strain COVID19 was creating to staff the home. She didn't complain. She didn't flee saying I can't do this anymore. Ms. Lottie met the varying needs of each client, helping them understand what they needed to do to stay safe and healthy. Ms. Lottie quickly built new skills, closely following doctor's orders of taking temperature and using the Pulse Oximeter. She respected the upheaval the virus created in the home and worked to keep life normal, all while wearing protective gear. Her vigilant use of PPE kept her safe as the COVID19 client's communication mode is to come close, touching and pulling a person, taking them to what he wants to say. Ms. Lottie respects the insidious nature of COVID19 but she does not let it stop her from respecting the clients she supports. The dedication to her work as a DSP helped keep COVID19 from continuing to spread. Ms. Lottie has modeled character and strength that all can heed if ever we have to answer "What would you do if COVID19 hits your client(s)?" Thank you, Ms. Lottie Smith for be amazing!

SHREE CLOUSER
DISTRICT 2 -
MERCER RESIDENTAL
SERVICES



DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Shree Clouser Nomination

Shree primarily works at our Van Wert ADS and has led many activities, volunteer projects, and special community projects. Some highlights are (prior to COVID-19) assisting clients in volunteering at the humane society and at the Treasure House to benefit the homeless shelters of the Rescue Mission. She repeatedly volunteered to take clients to volunteer at the veteran's hospital and assisted them in making craft and snack items to donate while at the hospital. She assisted clients in donating countless items to various charities such as the food pantry, YWCA, humane society, Rescue Mission, deployed troops during Giving Tuesday. She initiated and worked with a co-worker and clients on creating and donating Busy Bee Bags, which are sensory kits donated to police and fire departments, to be given to children and adults who could be overwhelmed during emergency situations. She was working with Braun Ambulances to have Busy Bee Bags included in their ambulances prior to shipping out to emergency services across the country (this was only stopped because of the pandemic). She facilitated positive community connections with the police and fire departments and Braun through the Busy Bee Bags. She helped raise awareness and collect donations for the MRSI annual fundraiser. She has a very positive attitude with clients, co-workers, supervisors, families, and community members. She has often lifted our spirits on difficult days. She is reliable and adaptable to the ever-changing environment at day services. When ADS reopened at the end of June 2020, Shree quickly adapted to all the changes. She has created many activities and crafts to keep clients engaged in meaningful activities while they are attending ADS and not able to go on outings. She has purchased and donated items to make all these activities and crafts possible. She has focused on finding exercises that all members of her pod can participate in and enjoy. I asked her to teach us about race, social injustice, and how to treat people who are different from us with kindness and respect. Clients (and staff) really listened to her perspective and learned such important life lessons that they are carrying into their community.

AMY FLOWERS
DISTRICT 3 -
RHDD

DISTRICT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Amy Flowers Nomination

I am nominating Amy Flowers for this award for many reasons. She has worked for RHDD as a dedicated DSP for 24 years. She takes it very seriously to know the Individual on an intimate level in order to provide them with the highest quality of care. On August 16th, this dedication saved a man's life. Amy has worked with Individual M.L. for quite some time. On this date, when she arrived for shift at this gentleman's home, she noticed he was sleeping most of the day, that he didn't seem to have much of an appetite and mentioned a minor pain in his right side. Amy reached out to her supervisor in the afternoon giving a report and stated she felt that something wasn't right. Based on her intuition our nurse advised Amy to take him to the ER to be checked out. After hours of testing and waiting, M.L. was diagnosed and immediately transported to OSU. Amy accompanied M.L. and was not concerned how long she would be there or how she was going to get back home, she wanted to make sure this gentleman was getting the care that he needed.

This is the type of dedication and care that makes a DSP a true professional. Because of Amy's persistence and close oversight, this gentleman has made a full recovery. Amy's dedication to the mission of RHDD and the Individual's she serves is above and beyond.

BEN KENDRICK
DISTRICT 4 -
ASSURED HEALTH OHIO

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Ben Kendrick Nomination

Selfless, kind, compassionate, hardworking, funny, reliable, caring, loyal, determined. These are only a few of the characteristics that come to mind when I think of Ben Kendrick. Ben has been an employee of Assured Health for four years. From the beginning he has been an exemplary employee. He has worked with some of our most difficult individuals and has been successful with all of them. He has shown a patience that is rare. His ability to connect with the people he works with is apparent in the time he works with them and how successful he is with them. He will be the first one to volunteer to cover shifts, work overtime, or go out of his way to accomplish things; with no complaints. He even dropped everything to help move a bed bug infested mattress! In addition to working well with all our individuals, he is continuously working on himself. He was hired in as a DSP, has become a House Manager, and recently applied for a Residential Manager position. He volunteers to go to any trainings available whether he is paid or not. A couple months ago he requested to meet with the Director of Operations or Director of Residential Services regularly to increase his leadership skills and learn more about different aspects of our company so he can continue to grow within. The success story that stands out the most about Ben is with an individual he started doing Shared Living with; Darby. Ben had reached out to Assured Health a while ago; interested in Shared Living. We inquired in our County to see if any individuals were looking to do Shared Living. We were informed about Darby; who had lived with family and other providers his whole life. He was given notice by his last provider due to some unsafe decisions he was making and putting his housemates at risk. Ben and Darby met, and the rest is history! Darby has been living with Ben and his housemates since 2019. They have become one great big family. Ben's family considers Darby part of their family now. Their arrangement gives Darby the independence he needs while still providing him the support he needs to be safe. This arrangement is so much more than making sure Darby is safe. Darby is happy and never looked so good. When Darby came back to ADS and staff asked him how he was doing during the quarantine and how it was living with Ben during it he said, "He loves it". A response like this from Darby is amazing! In fact, when I told Darby about wanting to nominate Ben, asked if he cared if I shared his story, and asked if he had anything to share, he said, "it is all good." Ben is making a tremendous difference in Darby's life by giving him many people who genuinely care about him and treat him with respect and like family. Ben is a rare person that every employer is looking for and every person is lucky to cross paths with.

ERIN CRONICK
DISTRICT 5 - THE SOCIETY



DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Erin Cronick Nomination

For over ten years, Erin Cronick has been an extremely dedicated DSP with The Society. Erin is a quiet, compassionate, behind the camera type of person. She focuses her energy on the individuals she serves as they are her top priority. Erin's role with The Society is as a DSP with The Link adult day program. However, it's not uncommon to also see her working at any of the agency's 21 homes. Going above and beyond is a "normal" role for Erin. She quietly works behind the scenes to ensure all of the individuals feel engaged and valued. She can often be found doing an errand after work to pick up a special surprise for the following day or stopping by to check on an individual who hasn't been to The Link for a few days. Erin knows what each of the individuals she serves likes and dislikes. She spends time listening to sweet songs being sung, watching the same movie for the 1,000 time, shooting the basketball over and over, pushing an individual in their wheelchair miles through parks and playing Marco Polo in the pool while others splash her for laughs. Even the Covid-19 health crisis, hasn't slowed her down! Erin has traveled thousands of miles to work in all the counties we serve, wherever she's needed. Early in the pandemic she picked up extra hours, working 26 days straight! Erin has never missed a day of work and travels over an hour from home to work without complaining. Erin's reliability is unmatched! She has continued to go out of her way, on her own time, with her dog, to visit with The Link individuals who are remain at home during the pandemic. She takes FaceTime calls from them just to hear the latest, greatest songs they love to sing. Everyone may miss "Erin hugs", but she is always there for them! Erin's supervisors recognized her leadership skills. She was recommended and chosen for The Society's LEAD Program for leadership exploration. Erin has never missed a class deadline and talks with her mentor regularly. Erin has not let Covid-19 change her focus on her job. She has, however, been flexible and made adjustments to best meet the needs of each individual. She's a calming force who makes a difference for both the individuals she supports and her coworkers. We are thankful to have Erin on The Society Team!

STEVE CHILDERS
DISTRICT 6 -
THE ALPHA GROUP

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Steve Childers Nomination

Steve is a Program Specialist for our Westerville site. From the onset of our closing down Steve remained in constant contact with all of his individuals, checking on them and seeing if they needed anything. Steve started with Zoom sessions way before we were given the opportunity to be able to provide a billable service through virtual. Steve spent many hours creating fun and exciting games and trips through his zoom sessions, and even kept up with his volunteer schedule by picking up and dropping of blankets to be made, to be given back to My Very Own Blanket for them to distribute. Once were able to open up 16 out of his 18 enrollees were eager to return; that alone says a lot about the friendship that they have with Steve.

EUGENIA ROBINSON
DISTRICT 7 -
KOINONIA HOMES



\$500 AWARD

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Eugenia Robinson Nomination

We would like to take this opportunity to nominate Eugenia Robinson for the OPRA Direct Support Professional Award. For her 15 years of service in her role as a DSP, to her willingness to move from providing services at our day center to providing services at a home that eventually tested positive for COVID, to her uplifting and motivational way of working with people, Eugenia deserves to be recognized by OPRA as an outstanding DSP. During her 15-year career at Koinonia, Eugenia has been known as a “star”. For the past 6 years, that star has been shining for us at Koinonia Enterprises, our adult day and employment services program. Eugenia takes time to get to know each individual - many of whom claim her as their “best friend”. Health and safety are always her priority, but she makes sure that everyone is enjoying their day by knowing every intricate detail of each individual’s plan and providing programming accordingly. Her smile never goes away, even on the most difficult of days. Her patience makes such a difference when anyone, such as a new attendee, is reluctant to participate. Her gentle encouragement helps people come out of their shell, try new things, and form friendships. She keeps things running smoothly at Koinonia Enterprises, helping everyone feel connected and valued. Eugenia displays great pride in her work and is always looking for ways to improve the quality of services being provided to individuals. Eugenia is positive and calm when new directives are given, and she takes the time to really understand and embrace the direction the agency is heading when these changes occur. This has been critical with all the changes that we have encountered this year with COVID. When our day programs suddenly closed, Eugenia was deployed to work at one of our ICF Residential homes. Eugenia jumped right into programming there and assisting those individuals without one complaint or any pushback because it was “what the individuals needed”.

Eugenia Robinson

Nomination continued

As fate would have it, Eugenia ended up working in a house where individuals and staff had tested positive for COVID, including Eugenia. When we checked in with her after her diagnosis, she said the following: "I'm confident in the care that I gave the individuals at work – I always wore my mask and gloves but one day, in particular, I was in very close contact with an individual who needed a lot of help who ended up having COVID. I was just doing my job, and this was the outcome, but I wouldn't change the amount of care I gave to the individuals. I love what I do. I'm OK, I feel OK, I'm praying for all the individuals that have been diagnosed and any other staff that may be affected by this as well. So ready for 2021!" Eugenia is not only a strong advocate and support for these individuals but a leader and role model to her peers. She treats everyone with respect and truly embraces the Koinonia Way. Most recently, when asked if she wanted to return to work at our day program when reopened, Eugenia said she felt she needed to stay with the individuals at the ICF house she was at and help them through these times and be a constant for them. It's difficult to fully express what a pleasure it is to work with someone with such integrity, compassion, and dedication to their role and to this field. Thank you for considering Eugenia Robinson for the DSP award.

MADISON JACKSON
DISTRICT 8 -
ECHOING HILLS



DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD



Madison Jackson

Nomination

When we asked other team members (QIDP's and peers), along with the individuals-served and their families, what they have to say about Maddi, there is a common theme. She is admired, cherished, and loved! This isn't just a job to Maddi – receiving a paycheck every two weeks – it is her life. This thriving young adult, so full of life, takes the individuals out into the community on her personal time. She is here to serve and to truly make a difference! Maddi is always willing to work extra shifts, come in early and/or stay late. Whatever is needed, she is willing. Peers and supervisors never have to worry if Maddi will do what is asked; she does it with a giving and humble heart. She does it thoroughly and is always respectful. Maddi is a person who takes action. If she identifies a problem in the workplace, she will bring it to the attention of her supervisor but also offer a solution.

When Maddi was made aware of the labor shortage in our Southwest Region due to COVID-19 hitting two of our homes, she stepped up to the plate and volunteered to go work there to serve. She didn't give it a second thought. "She is selfless," explains a supervisor. As we heard news stories and even encountered some of these experiences of our own, frontline teams not showing up because of their fears, Maddi was saying, 'I will go!' She did this knowing won't see my own family and friends for at least a month. Maddi's demeanor is calm and pleasant, and she doesn't let anything stress her out. What a blessing not only for the team but also for those we serve! Those who call Echoing Hills' home share the following: I really like her, and enjoy her company. She is so easy going, and you can tell she really cares about all of us. She makes me smile. She knows how to have fun. She's crazy (laughing with good-spirited sarcasm). She brings a smile and laughter wherever she goes. She treats me like a person. She spends time with me. She's like my sister. She always goes above and beyond. These comments say so much. They say Maddi is a person of relationship, and she treats people with the respect and dignity that they deserve. They say she is committed and can be counted on.

Madison Jackson

Nomination continued...

Making the decision to move Aric to a residential facility was the single most agonizing decision I had to ever make in my life. He had already lost so much in the year prior to his move, his caregiver and beloved mother, his home, hobbies, and any sense of normalcy he had been afforded by living with us while we searched for a permanent placement. My worst fear, as I left him alone in his room at Echoing Hills for the first time, was that he would feel alone and afraid. He was a stranger to his caregivers, and they were strangers to him. He is deaf, and his speech is poor; all attempts to teach him sign language or alternate communication methods had failed. I was concerned that he would never truly feel at home in this new environment and that ultimately, he would withdraw into himself and slowly wither away. Slowly but surely, she began to build a rapport with Aric. Despite major communication barriers, she won his trust. She took the time to get to know him, his interests, his history, what made him frustrated, and what truly mattered to him. She even came on her days off to take him on outings to his favorite restaurant or ball games with her family. Maddi stepped up in the most touching way when quarantine prevented us from celebrating Aric's birthday with him for the first time in 44 years. On the day of his birthday, she went to work early and completely decorated his room with streamers and balloons and Happy Birthday signs. She made sure he had presents to open, candles for his cake, and did her best to include us in the celebration by Facetiming us while the residents and staff sang Happy birthday to him. I will never forget the smile on his face. I couldn't stop the tears that night. I was overwhelmed with gratitude. I could share so many more examples of Maddi's selfless love, but suffice it to say that she is nothing less than an angel in the eyes of our family. An answer to prayers. Aric is thriving at Echoing Hills due in no small part of her purposeful effort to make him feel safe, loved, and accepted. Madison Jackson truly is a top-notch, highly respected, and admired Direct Support Professional most deserving of this award.

JENNIFER POWELL
DISTRICT 1 - OHIO VALLEY
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES



FRONT LINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Jennifer Powell Nomination

Ms. Jennifer Powell was a DSP at our Appleridge home for 3 years before accepting a position as Home Coordinator. This home is special as all 4 residents have developmental disabilities along with diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder. When Jennifer started as Home Coordinator the home was having multiple behavior related UIs per month. It had gained a reputation as a difficult site making staffing difficult. Jennifer has had a positive impact on this home in just 6 short months and that is outside her stabilizing influence during COVID19. She is a great advocate for her residents. Jennifer has worked with the team including guardians, SSAs, behavior specialists, speech and occupational therapists plus the OVRs program team to implement changes to better support the resident's needs. She has followed the team's guidance implementing use of sensory objects and tools.

Jennifer assisted staff to learn how to interact with their residents in a supportive and positive way. This has been critical as tools are of no value if not properly and consistently used. Since Jennifer and her team made these changes, the 4 men in the home have flourished. The number of behavior related UIs have dropped dramatically. There have only been 2 in the last 8 months and 0 in the last 5 months. The men have learned to be more independent and have more pride in themselves and their home. Staff have worked hard to involve them with small cleaning and cooking tasks. They are more engaged with the flow of their day and seem happy and content. Jennifer has quickly shown skills as an amazing supervisor. She is always there to support the staff and the residents. Jennifer is known to drop everything and go to the home when needed either by the men or staff. Her home is now fully staffed and staff enjoy working there. Appleridge has come such a long way under Jennifer's supervision. Her team feels supported and is embracing the tools they need to help the men thrive. Jennifer is constantly coming up with new activities and suggestions for her staff. She is the embodiment of what OVRs's mission is all about - To enrich the lives of persons with developmental disabilities and their families by providing individually focused services, safe environments, and opportunities for integration into their communities.

TAIWANNA JOHNSON
DISTRICT 2 - CHOICES IN
COMMUNITY LIVING



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Taiwanna Johnson Nomination

Taiwanna Johnson's warm and caring personality is at the center of two homes in her role as Program Manager at Choices' Mill Trace home (four men) and Wendhaven home (serving three individuals with autism.) Dependable, empathetic, calming, patient, fun – whether you are a client, team member or family member, these are just a few of the words used to describe every interaction you have with Taiwanna. She has an affinity for clients and their families, providing a soothing and caring space for each of them in good times and in times of stress. She excels in conflict-resolution.

Direct care staff relate and respond to her because she understands their responsibilities and concerns, having served in direct care before assuming her supervisory role. She is particularly calming with clients, which makes her role at Wendhaven especially valuable. She has a way of not only talking with the clients, but of really, deeply listening and understanding them in a way few people can. She teaches staff to do that deep and open listening as well, resulting not only in clients who are happier and more secure, but in direct care staff who feel valued, respected and capable. She never asks staff to do anything she herself will not do, which has meant recently caring for a client with COVID. In a time of uncertainty and almost moment to moment change, she is a constant, always there and always smiling, that smile that is stronger and brighter than even a pandemic.

LAURA CREGO
DISTRICT 3 -
BUCKEYE COMMUNITY
SERVICES



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Laura Crego Nomination

At Buckeye Community Services, we have found that our most successful DSPs often become the most successful Front-Line Supervisors. They have already demonstrated a commitment to the growth and development of the people we serve, and they feel they can be even more impactful managing teams of DSPs who are providing the same services. More importantly, they become leaders – leaders who will continue to fiercely advocate for those they serve and advance opportunities for all individuals with developmental disabilities. BCS is very fortunate to have found such a remarkable leader in our ADS Program Manager, Laura Crego. Laura began on this path a little more than nine years ago, when she applied for a part-time position in a residential waiver home serving a single individual. When BCS incorporated adult day services into its service array, Laura became part of the original team at the first ADS site. She also became one of our very first Job Coaches during the next few months. As the programs quickly grew, she became a full-time DSP, then a Service Coordinator, and ultimately the Program Manager. She has held that position for the past three and a half years. In her time as ADS Program Manager, Laura has led her team to accomplish some truly great things. She worked with local coordinators to establish a charter for Special Olympics so consumers could participate in tournaments, Spring Games, and other events that were previously not available to the individuals we serve. After basketball season ended in 2019, Laura organized an exhibition game where our own BCS Wolves took on the BCS Management Team. The game was a huge success, and the (incredibly amusing) memories made that day are still talked about today. In 2018, she advocated for individuals from the ADS program to design their own float and participate in the annual Jackson Apple Festival Parade along with area schools. In 2019, Laura organized the first ever March on Main Street in Jackson County during Disability Awareness Month. The purpose of that event was to heighten awareness regarding people with disabilities, and it culminated with consumers from several counties marching through city blocks and meeting at the County Courthouse. Local businesses, organizational leaders, and government officials marched with us during the event, and many community members rallied in support. In the fall of 2018,

Laura Crego

Nomination continued

Laura recognized a great need for the people we serve, and she organized an advocacy group to help individuals find their own voices. She worked with local leaders and community members to find speakers for advocacy events, and she coordinated fundraising campaigns to help fund advocacy group activities. In early 2020, when COVID-19 specifically interrupted adult day services, Laura worked extremely hard to find ways for individuals to maintain contact with their ADS friends. She coordinated lines of communication every day so that individuals would not feel alone, and she has created message videos to make sure that nobody feels forgotten during our time apart. As conditions changed, she organized ADS services in a somewhat diminished capacity, but she made sure that activities were still as meaningful as possible. The passion Laura has for her work is undeniable and irrepressible. She has made it her mission in life to ensure that individuals have a variety of choices and have every opportunity to be part of their communities. She has created an atmosphere in which individuals do not feel marginalized, and she is committed to BCS' core value that everyone has the ability to learn and grow. She is a model of compassion, advocacy, and determination to her team members and the individuals served at ADS. It's our privilege to nominate Laura for the 2020 OPRA Front Line Supervisor Award.

ANDREA JAWORSKI
DISTRICT 4 -
ASSURED HEALTH OHIO

FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Andrea Jaworski

Nomination

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them become what they are capable of being." -- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Helping Others Succeed" is the mission of Assured Health and what we strive to do every day. As a supervisor, Andrea exemplifies this mission and does everything in her power to positively impact our individuals, employees, and whoever she meets. She has a reputation of doing whatever it takes to help others succeed, even if it means sacrificing personal time. One specific circumstance involved her receiving a call in the middle of the night regarding an individual who may have been in danger. Without hesitation, Andrea hopped out of bed and went to that individual's house to support them and their staff. Without thinking twice, she truly exemplified a servant leader. When working with Andrea, there is always a positive vibe. She brings acceptance and understanding to every environment she is in, which helps to promote trust and positivity within our organization. She is always willing to listen, whether it be a positive interaction or an issue an employee is having with their schedule, an individual, management, or otherwise. When listening, she provides feedback and tries to reach a solution if there is a problem, to ensure happiness. With Andrea, things are never black and white. She always takes the time to think through each situation and come up with a solution that will best fit that person. She does not let the "way things are done" stop her. If thinking outside the box, being creative, or earning a couple weird looks is what gets the results the individual wants then that is what is done. Andrea also has a reputation of being creative, outgoing, and fun. She comes up with countless ideas to show staff appreciation, bring light into the lives of employees and individuals, and overall, just have a good time. Her creative trainings help employees better understand expectations and in turn they feel supported when encountering obstacles or something they have never done before. She leads the way in creating positive videos that exemplify our culture and make our employees want to continue working for us. Her ideas for staff appreciation go a long way in showing our employees how grateful we are to have them. Tik Tok Friday's would not be a thing without her! Jeffrey Hayzlett, ENTREPRENEUR LEADERSHIP NETWORK VIP breaks down servant leadership into four sections: 1. Encourage diversity of thought. 2. Create a culture of trust. 3. Have an unselfish mindset. 4. Foster leadership in others. This could not describe Andrea any better. Assured Health is extremely lucky to have her as part of the team.

DEB LEWIS
DISTRICT 5 - THE SOCIETY



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Deb Lewis Nomination

Deb Lewis is The Society's Glenda the Good Witch. She magically appears at all the right times! Deb cares for everyone and uses her kindness, strength, positivity, and calm demeanor to keep individuals and staff focused, engaged, safe & calm. Her philosophy of "Get Up, Dress Up, Show Up, and Never Give Up!" has provided the yellow brick road through the pandemic. Early in the Covid-19 stay at home order, as a true Society leader, Deb waved her wand to get everyone organized. The Society was without a manager at one of our homes and we had a new manager at another. Deb jumped in to assist at those additional homes to ensure continuity for the individuals and team during the challenge. As a mentor to the team, Deb not only trains on the day-to-day details and new requirements, she reminds us to be compassionate and have fun. One of Deb's super powers is her skill at training. Deb serves as a team mentor. She provides training not only on the routine operations of the homes but has embraced the additional training requirements that have come about as a result of Covid-19. Deb began early on to start working with individuals on wearing masks, hand washing and social distancing even before formal training programs were established. Deb works hard daily to ensure the individuals and staff understand WHY precautions are being taken. Along with promoting the new formal training programs established, advocating for the team and individuals, Deb has also supported staff with her calm and reassuring demeanor throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This allows the staff to vent their worst fears. She works hard to answer their questions and worries, calmly and in layman's terms. Through her leadership we have not lost a single staff out of fear at her homes. Deb uses her creative eye to ensure overtime remains low and utilizes part time staff. People love working with and for her. She has students who return to work on breaks. She is well respected by the team and other Site Managers and looked to often for advice and guidance. Deb has not let the restrictions for going out in the community stop individuals from being active! Deb was the first to embrace utilizing Face time, Skype, and Zoom for keeping in touch through this new magical option. Individuals enjoy staying connected to their Aktion Club meetings and friends, Special Olympics exercises, club meetings, church services, musicals and arts related programming.

Deb Lewis

Nomination continued

Deb knows connections are important to the individuals! She also helps the individuals send and receive cards to the homes. The ladies especially love crafts, beauty routines, being pampered – these activities have been increased since Covid-19 lock down hit. The individuals have not gained the “Covid 15” by eating more and being less active. They have maintained weight and their exercise routines, movement is encouraged daily and watching portions is always a big push for her homes. Deb is a kind, dedicated, compassionate, professional who remains a constant, calming force for The Society and the individuals. She stands out because she treats everyone with respect, takes the time to listen to people’s wants, needs, interests, and concerns. She works to give everyone opportunities. Deb builds upon staff’s skills to provide individuals the chance to learn, grow, try new things, and keep both staff and individuals actively engaged. She is kind. She is calm. She teaches. She mentors. She is very comforting and reassuring to our staff.

ANGELA RAYMER
DISTRICT 6 -
ADVANCING ABILITIES



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Angela Raymer Nomination

A Super Hero is defined as a fictional character having extraordinary superhuman powers. Well at Embracing Autism, we have our own super hero in Angela Raymer. She has been supporting people with disabilities for over 20 years and day in and day out her passion and dedication to the field is so evident. She arrives early every day to the Bogota and Shasta Homes with a smile and positive words of wisdom for our staff and takes the time to say good - morning to every person residing in the homes. Like most superheroes, they do not look for praise or accolades, they are present in our lives to help and to solve problems and that is exactly what Angela does. She helps with cooking, hygiene, doctor appointments, and cleaning, shopping, hiring, training, transportation and yes, she even has a toolbox in her car for any emergency maintenance needs. She is our one-stop shop for everything and anything.

Since Angela arrived in 2016 – she along with all of our managers have courageously fought off the dreaded turn-over villain and has succeeded. In the past 4 years – we have lost approximately 4 DSPs due to them finding better paying jobs and/or moved out of the state. Our state surveys have been outstanding and the quality of life for each person we support has improved greatly.

Angela's dedication and super powers do not vanish at 5 pm or on weekends either – if there is a power outage, Angela is there, if an individual has a bad fall, Angela is there, if a guardian has an issue, Angela is on the phone with them – the never-ending needs of a 24/7 ICF is no match for Angela, she is selfless, extremely devoted and relentless. People say Superheroes are fictional characters but we know better. She does not wear a cape or a colorful spandex outfit but we know that superheroes do exist because we have one and her name is Angela Raymer.

LATONYA MOORE
DISTRICT 7 -
KOINONIA HOMES



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



LaTonya Moore

Nomination

We are pleased to nominate LaTonya Moore for the OPRA Front Line Supervisor Award. LaTonya deserves this award because she leads with respect and always ensures that her team has what they need to be successful. She also exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and cooperation through her willingness to jump into any situation and work side by side with her team and is well respected by her team. For these reasons and more, LaTonya deserves to be recognized by OPRA as an outstanding front line supervisor. LaTonya is known for treating all of her staff members equally and with respect. The team at Brookpark has been through many changes in their transition to join Koinonia from another provider. Many of the staff had been together 10 years, and feared they would be disbanded to other sites and locations - but that wasn't the case. Latanya gave not only advocated to keep the team together, but she also introduced them to opportunities to grow their careers. LaTonya also goes above to make sure that her team's ideas are shared with upper management. She always listens to the staff and takes their suggestions to heart making Brookpark home an environment that everyone enjoys to be part of. According to a member of her team, "I've been at the Brookpark house for almost 15 years. Out of all the house managers I've seen come and go, LaTanya is the only one who treats us as equals. She goes above and beyond for our individuals and her staff. She works side by side with us on the floor as we care for our individuals and make sure every employee feels valued and comfortable to discuss anything with her." We are grateful that LaTonya is a front line supervisor at Koinonia! She deserves to be recognized for her leadership, ability to connect with her staff, and her unwavering dedication to jump in and do whatever is necessary for the individuals she serves.

ANGELA SUCHLAND
DISTRICT 8 -
CAPABILITIES



FRONTLINE SUPERVISOR AWARD



Angela Suchland Nomination

Angela Suchland started as a DSP in Day Services at Capabilities in 2014. She has been in her management position as a front line supervisor for much of her tenure as she was quickly promoted. Angela oversaw the transformation of the day services she supervises moving from facility-based to community-based. In 2020, she pivoted to finding a way to reopen the services her team provides during the pandemic. While our community based services were closed, she helped the company pivot to virtual ADS. She says yes to change when others say why. Her attention to detail is admirable. To date, no spread of the virus has happened under her watch due to her leadership and strict following of company protocols including sanitation and social distancing techniques. Throughout all of this, Angela has kept her team motivated and together to serve people with disabilities. She is respected for her calm under storm demeanor. She listens and acts on staff concerns. She participates in ISP meetings and provides value input. Angela continues to provide DSP services when staff are absent. She never lets a person go unserved.

CLEARWATER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

COMMUNITY MEMBER OF THE YEAR



Clearwater Council of Governments Nomination

For many years the Clearwater COG has made supporting providers a priority. Nancy Richards and her team worked with their member counties to explore ways to ensure providers had the support and resources they need to be successful. Once the Coronavirus hit Northwest Ohio the Clearwater team supported providers on another level. They established three supply areas throughout the COG region to make supplies and PPE readily available. They also assigned a staff member to each county to assist in getting much needed supplies to providers. The supplies and PPE are being provided to anyone that needs them free of charge. The Clearwater Team has also provided free training throughout the duration of the pandemic. They are doing whatever it takes to help providers navigate the challenges that come with this unprecedented situation.

MAUMEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Maumee Police Department Nomination

"A community-based participatory partnership (CBPP) is a collaborative body of individuals and organizations working together on a common goal or issue of importance to the community. It consists of a mutually beneficial relationship where all parties have shared responsibilities, privileges and power (Connors, 2003)." The Maumee Police Department is the epitome of a community partner. They work with Assured Health, the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities (LCBDD), families, and individuals to keep people safe while showing understanding and compassion. Here are two incredible examples that show this Department is more than just talk, they take action. 1) We work with a young man who has a traumatic brain injury and a long history of trauma. It is not common that police know the social history of individuals. There have been days we have called to give them a "heads up" when our individual is having a difficult day and they always respond with "we are here if you need us and we will have officers on standby." During a particularly difficult time we contacted the Chief of Police, Dave Tullis, to ask for a meeting. He responded with coordinating the meeting quickly. Present in this meeting were the Chief and several members of the police department who have known this person since he was a child. They were able to provide our agency and the LCBDD SSA with trauma history and information dating back to when he was a child that none of us knew about. That helps us approach the individual differently and helped us train our staff to respond more effectively. This individual prefers to ride in the car to calm down. Come to find out when he was a child and the Police would come out for calls on him or see him walking down the street, they would pick him up and let him drive around with them. 15 years later this is still a way for him to feel safe and decompress. While we still have instances that result in having to call the police, the incidents have greatly decreased because of this understanding. They have shown they care for him and they care for his success.

Maumee Police Department Nomination continued

2) We worked with a young man who would talk about the Maumee Police all the time. I contacted his mom to get more information about his fascination with them. Mom explained a relationship formed between this man and the Police that is years in the making. Mom said it all started in Junior High when the obsession started. His school had a Resource Officer, Derek Sanderson, who was stationed at his school during the day. This young man would get in trouble on purpose just so he could see Officer Sanderson. Officer Sanderson made a deal with him that he could only come see him if he was having a good day and then the officer would read a book with him. This turned into a great relationship. A short while back this turned into the man calling 911 to let the Officers know he had a good day. While they explained to him he can't call 911 for this, Officers Sanderson and York gave him their e-mail addresses so he could tell them all about his good days. These e-mails still continue! Mom reports they do not just do things when reached out to. They reach out to mom and this man as well. When he was in a bike accident when he was younger the officers would stop by days after to check on him. They also would tell mom when other kids were targeting him and they would keep an eye out for him about town to keep him safe. We can only imagine the amount of lives they have impacted if we already know of three (these two young men and us). They recently faced budget cuts and had to decrease the size of their department, but that has not stopped them in their response and approach. This is not the case of couple good officers, this is the culture of the Maumee Police Department, this is what they do, and they help people. We could not be more fortunate to have them as allies.

NATALIE SWAIN
KOINONIA HOMES



GARY LEVOX JOB COACH AWARD



Natalie Swain Nomination

We are pleased to nominate Natalie Swain for the OPRA Gary LeVox Job Coach Award. For adapting to new technologies and service delivery models during COVID-19, to providing outstanding job coaching skills to individuals working during COVID at an essential business, and for her outstanding placement of 15 individuals in integrated, competitive employment in a little under 4 months, Natalie personifies the Gary LeVox Job Coach Award and deserves to be recognized by OPRA for her achievements. We always knew that Natalie was the type of job coach who typically goes above and beyond in her role, but the dedication she had displayed this year, as a tsunami of changes to the way we deliver services in light of COVID is happening, is truly remarkable. She has risen to the challenge, inspiring her co-workers and leaders with her upbeat attitude and willingness to adapt to change. Natalie works as a Career Coordinator at Koinonia Enterprises to help individuals gain competitive, integrated employment. When COVID started, many of our individuals suddenly lost their jobs. After receiving the green light from our service partners, Natalie worked tirelessly to help individuals on her caseload apply for unemployment benefits and connect them to virtual vocational resources to stay engaged while they were not working. She never blinked an eye when we told her most of her services were going virtual and adapted and jumped right in to deliver services in a new remote format to individuals. Natalie even suggested some tips to management on how services could be better delivered and would always share feedback on her experience as she navigated through this new service delivery model, dedicated to ensuring we were still providing the highest quality of services to our individuals. When a few of our individuals were working at essential businesses at the peak of COVID and needed on-site coaching and supports, Natalie automatically went in to assist, because that day to day support was still needed. As soon as the world started to open again, Natalie was ready to help individuals who had been waiting to get back in the job market. At the time of this nomination in August, Natalie has placed over 15 individuals in jobs from mid-May to date. She has remained committed to individuals and their success, passionate about her career, collaborative with service partners and county boards, communicative with teams and management, and innovative and flexible through all the changes in 2020. We are thankful to have Natalie as a part of our Employment Services team at Koinonia and to have the opportunity to nominate her for this award.

GREENHILL HOME STAFF RESIDENT HOME ASSOCIATION OF DAYTON

TEAM AWARD



Greenhill Home Staff Nomination

If ever there was a group of dedicated DSP's deserving of Ohio Provider Resource Association's Team Award it is the outstanding care providers at Resident Home Association's Greenhill Road Home. Consider the following...Like most DSP's, this amazing group of people have worked tirelessly throughout this pandemic to not only help keep this group safe and healthy, but to keep everyone happy and engaged. This outstanding group of dedicated professionals not only provides the basic care that some would be satisfied giving, they go the extra mile to make the residents feel special and proud. They have worked countless hours on end to provide the stability these men deserve and have done so in a time frame when the home manager left, another worker is out on FMLA and newly hired DSP's did not pan out. This home has several residents that could be severely compromised if COVID-19 makes its way in and the staff work vigilantly to keep the home safe. One resident has a recent diagnosis of cancer and another had a procedure to remove fluid from his brain. Four different residents above the age of 65 and are at an even higher risk from the virus. Throughout all this, birthdays have been celebrated virtual activities such as Pictionary, bingo and vacations have all been introduced and have been a source of fun and comfort to the residents and family connections have been maintained. Yet there is more. This home is really into music and one of the staff members is a musician. They have created a band and enjoy playing music together. The "Association House Band" is a great group of guys cheered on and supported by people that rise above their own hardships and the hardships of short staffing to make a positive difference in the lives of these gentlemen.

The level of team work, the sharing of duties, the willingness to look ahead and ask for help when needed is so very important and this group exemplifies the all for one approach. They constantly put the resident's needs first and work as a group to provide a harmonious, welcoming environment for these men. We are all so very proud of this group not only for what they do but who they are. We are so very thankful for their service and lucky they call Greenhill their home away from home. Did I mention we recently had to complete a DODD survey for this location that began prior to the full force of the pandemic?

DON SPICKLER
THE SOCIETY VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Don Spickler Nomination

The Society Board President, Don Spickler could be considered the “perfect” volunteer. His passion for our field, agency, staff, and individuals we serve is sincerely genuine. He has served on the board for seven years. Don became involved with The Society through his volunteer work with the Rotary. A true leader, Don also gives his time on The Society’s Finance Committee, Development Committee, Governance Committee, Buildings and Property Committee, Scholarship Committee, as a Trustee for our affiliate housing boards, and as a committee member on The SHC Foundation Board. Don believes he can have a larger impact if he understands how The Society operates. Not only does he support The Society, Don is on other local boards, chambers, and service clubs. A proud President for The Society, he is often found sharing mission, goals, stories, and recruiting volunteers, and securing donations both in kind and monetary for the organization. Don can be found at many of The Society’s events rolling up his sleeves and helping wherever he is needed. He has been found parking cars at the free community Boo Bash Halloween event. He dresses in a tuxedo every December as an escort for the Annual Fashion Show. Don enjoys bringing friends to the yearly Give Back on the Green Golf Outing and encourages all to donate to the organization. Retirement is not keeping Don down! You might find him with his trusty hedge trimmers, spending hours helping the maintenance team in getting home landscapes back in shape. Bringing his own tools and supplies, he quietly slips in and out so not to interrupt the individuals’ days. Don is a compassionate man who is a true advocate for The Society team. He genuinely wants to know everyone. He remembers birthdays, spouses and children’s names, and enjoys visiting with all our team. During Covid-19, he has been helped ensure the team and individuals feel valued. He helps management make deliveries of items of encouragement, thank you notes, cupcakes, and much more. Always masked, others might not know it’s him, but that won’t stop him! Don is a genuine, kind, sincere, and huge hearted man. As if all that wasn’t enough, he will anonymously donate gift cards, items, and cash to The Society “Sprinkle in Kindness Fund” to assist team members who might be struggling. We are a blessed to have a genuine, compassionate, engaged leader like Don Spickler at the helm!

LACEY RICHCREEK
ECHOING HILLS
VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Lacey Richcreek Nomination

Lacey Richcreek is a young woman who is wise beyond her 18 years. She thinks of others and how she can make a difference in this world. Lacey has a soft spot for the people who live at Echoing Hills. She attended Camp Echoing Hills when she was younger and hoped to return as a camp volunteer. You see, Lacey is no stranger to disabilities. She has walked that journey in her life, having been born with Cerebral Palsy. Lacey connected with Cordell Brown, Founder of Camp Echoing Hills, who also happens to have Cerebral Palsy. Lacey read his book and loved the story of his life and how he did not let his disability stop him from achieving the dream of helping others. Lacey is doing the same thing. She will graduate this year and aspires to attend law school, but not before pursuing her first degree in communications. For the 2019 holiday season, Lacey chose to start a fundraiser on Facebook. She used Facebook as her only avenue to sell Cerebral Palsy awareness t-shirts. Lacey sprung this last-minute idea on her parents, who though surprised, joined the cause and helped her with start-up money to purchase the shirts. Lacey said at first she thought she would be glad to raise enough money to pay her parents back for the t-shirt money with a little left over, but she far exceeded a small amount. Lacey raised \$1,000! Joy Padgett, Lacey's Aunt, joined us for conversation the day we met with Lacey, and she was quick to say that the fundraiser was 100% Lacey's idea! She did all the work herself, from brainstorming the concept of comparing t-shirt prices to finally establishing the fundraiser on Facebook. This girl is ambitious, adventurous, and does not shy away from a challenge. A quick example is a fact that she has been skiing and parasailing. Lacey's goal for the fundraiser was to be successful in raising enough funds to buy a gift for each person living at Echoing Hills of Central Ohio. \$1,000 was far more than she anticipated, but she quickly moved to the idea of buying more than one gift per person and donating the leftover funds.

Lacey Richcreek

Nomination Continued

The people living at Echoing Hills of Central Ohio are grateful for her thoughtful act of kindness. Lacey was concerned that adults might be forgotten at Christmas where presents are concerned, and she did not want that. She wanted everyone to have a gift to open. Lacey is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ. She has a steadfast faith that does not waiver. She started going to church with her grandparents and attended Sacred Heart School, the only school that would take her, and that turned out to be an amazing blessing. She told us how others around her showed her God's love and that it grew inside her. One particular Nun stood out to Lacey. She took Lacey under her wing and taught her to climb stairs, speak in class, and in public, in other words, teaching her independence and challenging her to be the very best she could be. At six years old, Lacey did not see the value in what this Nun was teaching her, but when Lacey grew older, and this amazing woman had passed away, the value became real. Lacey said, and I quote, "I learned more about myself after her death than when she was alive. Because at six years old, you don't really care like you do when you get older." Profound words from a very grown-up heart. Lacey works at Auer Ace Hardware in Coshocton, doing just about anything that is asked of her. She remarked that she does not have many friends in mainstream high school because her values and principles are different, but she quickly says that it is okay because her heart belongs to God. One of our Partners of Hope, Lacey, embodies the real Heart of Volunteer – giving selflessly of her time and talent. If you were to meet Lacey, just by looking into her eyes, you would see the love of Jesus. Together – with Lacey – we are creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities to know and experience Jesus Christ!

JORJI MILLIKEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BUCKEYE COMMUNITY SERVICES



LIFETIME LEADERSHIP AWARD



Jorji Milliken Nomination

For most of us, 2020 is a year that we won't soon forget. Global pandemics, polarizing elections, uncontrollable wildfires, and other startling world events will be among the memories we will all carry with us. Fortunately, the universe has a unique way of balancing the ebb and flow of life. We all witnessed a squirrel triumph over the Ninja Warrior course. We discovered the many additional uses for our numerous Amazon delivery boxes, such as awesome cat forts. We also demonstrated that strong, resilient, and determined community leadership is critical during challenging times, and great leaders help people accomplish great things. For the people at Buckeye Community Services, 2020 will hold another memorable moment and mark the end of an era. After more than forty years of dedicated service, we will be saying goodbye to our leader, our friend, and our mentor, Executive Director Jorji Milliken. Jorji came to BCS in the late 1970s, in what probably resembled a flurry of peace signs, bell bottoms, and flower petals in a variety of colors. She began her tenure as an on-site ICF House Manager at a newly developed concept home, along with her husband, David. The ICFs were a new alternative to the institutions which had previously housed people with developmental disabilities. She put her Social Worker skills to work in order to help people navigate the uncharted waters associated with their newfound independence. Jorji, along with a handful of other pioneers, worked tirelessly to craft "homes," where there was once, just "housing." A few years later, Jorji became an Associate Director at BCS, and she began to blaze another trail for those craving higher degrees of independence and longing to be part of the communities in which they lived. In 1992, Jorji led the opening of one of the very first homes in Ohio designed and funded by the Medicaid Waiver. The pilot home was located in southeastern Ohio, in rural Pike County, and Jorji's unyielding dedication to growth, independence, and opportunity shone through once again as the first three residents moved in. In 1998, Jorji became the Executive Director of BCS, and her commitment to the individuals who BCS serves has been irrepressible ever since. What started as a small non-profit service provider has grown to encompass eight counties, thousands of square miles, and countless affected lives. The growth that BCS has experienced over the years is the direct result of her commitment to what she has always believed in, which is that there is a place for everyone in this world, and everyone deserves the chance to develop and grow. Jorji is a fierce advocate, an astute industry leader, and a genuinely amazing person. The impact of her absence will be felt by many, and the impact of her presence in our lives will be felt for years to come. We at BCS will be eternally grateful for Jorji's guidance, her infectious spirit, and her friendship. The culture and solidarity she has created will be her legacy, as her vision is now our vision. On behalf of all who are served by BCS and all our staff, it is our honor and privilege to nominate Jorji Milliken for the 2020 Lifetime Leadership Award.

MICHAEL MALONE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MANAHAN



SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



Michael Malone

Nomination

Michael has been the Executive Director at Manahan for 24 years, but his unparalleled passion for the DD field did not begin there. Michael has been with our organization for 43 years, starting his journey as a Direct Support Professional, quickly becoming a Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional, then a Program Director. Michael holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership from Lourdes University. As we know, the Coronavirus has thrown a wrench in our professional and personal lives, but the pandemic has not disrupted the guidance that Michael continues to endlessly deliver. His dedication to our mission does not go unnoticed, as his commitment to our organization remains unprecedented amidst all of the COVID chaos that surrounds us. His selfless character is unmistakable as ensuring the care of others is always a frontrunner on his daily agenda. Michael's advocacy efforts are evident as he focuses on enriching the lives of not only the individuals that we serve, but the employees of Manahan as well. Michael never fails to put the health, safety, and happiness of all at Manahan in the forefront of his decisions. From supervising family outside visits to sitting on every committee that Manahan offers, Michael candidly is the definition of a true leader. His expertise in leadership has given Manahan a solid foundation to serve individuals with developmental disabilities for many years to come. Michael Malone has truly given his life to serve the individuals of our community, and all of the lives he has crossed paths with will forever be grateful for the guidance he has selflessly provided.

TOM WEAVER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CHOICES IN COMMUNITY
LIVING



SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



Tom Weaver Nomination

Tom Weaver will retire from his leadership and advocacy on behalf of people with developmental disabilities in 2021, leaving a legacy that not only supported thousands of individuals with disabilities across Ohio, but untold families and communities that have changed as part of his efforts. He has also been one of the most passionate advocates on behalf of Direct Support Professionals and other professionals in support of fair and equitable wages, as well as advocating for the recognition and respect they deserve for their services.

Tom became the Executive Director of Choices In Community Living in 1987, at the founding of the organization that began with just three homes in one county (Montgomery.) As he prepares for retirement, Choices is one of the largest and most respected providers in Ohio, serving seven counties and more than 400 individuals that includes an array of services not even thought of when he first assumed his role at Choices. He led his agency to be one of the first in providing residential services for people with autism and other challenging behaviors. He has always been committed to challenging his team to look at the possible in every individual and to build support so that each individual can receive services in his/her own community. He has been a leader in supporting the newest technology to support individuals and staff.

Known as one of the most innovative providers in the State, under his leadership Adult Day Services (Fun-Fit), non-medical transportation and more have added creative options for individuals and their families. He has been an active leader at the community level and led his organization in the founding of Partners For Community Living. As he prepares for his retirement, he is also planning for more innovation for Choices and other residential providers, including his goal/dream to establish a Southwest Ohio Training Center to assure consistent and professional training for direct care professionals.

His legacy extends beyond Choices. He has been a long-time member and leader of the CREST Network, speaking fiercely for value-based, person-centered services in the community. He has been an exemplary leader with Ohio Provider Resource Association, serving on an array of committees and also serving as chair/president of the OPRA Board. His physical absence from Choices and the State level will be a significant loss to the DD field, but the culture of excellence, service, innovation and openness to change will remain a part of Choices In Community Living long into the future, as it will for those who worked alongside him throughout Ohio as some of the most impactful, dramatic and meaningful changes have been won because of his tenacious and passionate leadership over decades of professional service.

JERRI ELSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MUSKINGUM RESIDENTIALS



SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



Jerri Elson Nomination

Jerri Elson originally joined the IDD field in 1980, working for 2 small residential provider agencies. Jerri then committed 4 years to working with Children's Services but missed the work she found so rewarding and returned work in the field in 1988 at Gentle Brook in Coshocton, Ohio. While working for Gentle Brook, Jerri developed and enhanced the program while serving in many roles including Social Worker, Hab Director and Program Director. Jerri left Gentle Brook to take on the role of Executive Director at Muskingum Residential, Inc. in Muskingum County where she will be retiring from in December. I have a heavy heart knowing that Jerri will be leaving our ranks but at the same time I am thrilled for her that she can now spend quality time with her family.

Jerri does not like surprises, nor is she fan of the spotlight or fanfare. I know this because I have known Jerri since I was a 19 year old Direct Support Professional. I don't think either of us could have guessed how our professional lives would intertwine over the next twenty-plus years. I first met Jerri when she was the program director for what was then known as "College Park", in West Lafayette Ohio. A few year later, I was working as a DSP at Muskingum Residentials when Jerri became the new executive director after a huge administrative shake-up. Unbeknownst to the staff, the organization was in dire straits. They were barely able to make payroll. In addition to being the executive director, Jerri also took on the role of program coordinator because the agency could not afford both positions. Jerri worked behind the scenes, making wise financial decisions and good investments, including investing in long overdue raises for DSPs. Once she got the organization back on its feet, she was able to create the position of program coordinator and took a chance on me to fill that role. Muskingum Residentials has thrived under Jerri's leadership. She has consistently invested in staff and given them opportunities to learn and grow, even if that meant they would eventually outgrow the organization. She became involved with the Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals over ten years ago, bringing me into the fold early on to help shape the program in our region. Jerri then served on the OADSP Board of Directors for six years, acting as the board president for the last three years of her term. Over the years, Jerri has quietly influenced the field in little and big ways. She was never one to back down from a challenge. I affectionately refer to Jerri as my "work mom". There are people in positions they never saw themselves in because of Jerri's support and encouragement. The I/DD field in Ohio is better for her contributions, and although she is retiring, her influence will be felt for years to come through the work of those she encouraged and mentored.

RAY ANDERSON
AR TWO



SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD



Ray Anderson Nomination

Ray Anderson has more than 50 years of executive level management experiences in Health Care, primarily for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities. He holds a Bachelor and Master's degree from Bowling Green University and two years doctoral studies in Public Administration at The New York University. He has served in key positions on the public sector as Superintendent of the Wood County Board and NODC. He served as Commissioner and Assistant Director for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. In the private sector Ray was National Vice President for People Serve, VOCA Corporation and Chief Operations Officer for major providers in the private sector. He has served as a Director with The ARC, ANCOR, AAMR, the Board of Directors for OPRA, and others. Ray has participated in developing and testifying on rules, regulations, and legislation at the state and federal levels. He has and continues to be involved in the profession as Management Consultant on public policy and staffing issues affecting the services and programs for citizens with disabilities.

Ray assisted OPRA with the DSP Ohio TV and social media campaign efforts targeting households in the Columbus, Cleveland/ Akron, Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, Lima, Youngstown, Charleston/Huntington, Wheeling/Steubenville and Portsmouth markets.

The social media campaign garnered over 2.2 million impressions and drove over 40,000 visitors to the website. Ray helped OPRA raise \$100,000 for this campaign. We thank him for his unwavering support and we consider his help on this campaign to be a complete success.

ANITA ALLEN
OHIO PROVIDER
RESOURCE ASSOCIATION



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Anita Allen Nomination

Anita Allen has been a staunch advocate for people with disabilities and their providers since she started out as a DSP at Community Residential Services in Toledo almost 40 years ago. Anita gained valuable experience at Woodlane Industries, Woodlane Residential Services, the Lucas County Board of DD and RMS by serving on various committees and eventually sitting on the OPRA Board of Directors as the Executive Committee Secretary before finally landing her position as Vice President of OPRA in 2001. She also stood in as OPRA's interim CEO for a short time. As a key staff member of OPRA, Anita has held the OPRA office together by bringing the experience and expertise she gained over the years to help her fellow co-workers and provider members with forward thinking ideas and solutions. Anita has lead a variety of OPRA Committees as the staff liaison and represented OPRA on many DODD stakeholder groups such as ICF reimbursement redesign, provider certification and waiver nursing just to name a few. Anita also helped advocate issues surrounding the state budget and helped coordinate OPRA's workforce efforts with DSPOhio.

While the list of her Member-facing responsibilities is long, she also assisted with many crucial behind the scenes roles like organizing OPRA's training efforts and organizing OPRA's vendor partnership program. She also oversaw OPRA's HR and operational duties such as hiring processes, managing employee benefits, hosting OPRA's intern program with OSU's College of Social Work and building maintenance to assure a safe work environment for staff and visiting members.

Anita: you, your knowledge, and the passion for our Membership will be greatly missed.

We hope your retirement is filled with relaxing travel, stiff vodka tonics, and lots of The Rachel Maddow Show!