



# COMMUNITY NEWS



## WHAT'S NEW AROUND DSC . . .

### A Message from Danielle



We are currently two months into the shelter-at-home and our COVID-19 response. Every day, I am reminded of how remarkable our DSC Community is. Our staff has remained optimistic and continues to search for creative ways to stay connected with those we support. In our community homes, we shifted our residential services to a live in model for four homes in order to minimize potential exposure. We're thankful for those who quickly volunteered to do anything that was needed, making significant sacrifices in their personal lives to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people we support. We are extremely grateful for their efforts to keep everyone safe and cared for during these challenging times.

We also recognize the Family Development, Employment, Community Living, Individual and Family Support and Community Day Services employees, who have come together to provide virtual support, telehealth options and connections to family and friends. Many have also helped to fill open positions in our community-based homes. As always, but especially right now, our staff are providing the best possible care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Along with the people we support, we are facing this challenge with strength and hope.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you for all the donation support we have received during these challenging times from our DSC Family and the community at large. We have had donations of masks, meals provided for our homes, food and other needed items for those living independently in the community. We are grateful for our families and donors who are offering assistance as we face challenges with resource availability and additional financial obligations!

Until next time...



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# DSC Recognizes Exemplary Direct Support Staff

Despite the many challenges that have emerged during COVID-19, we have also witnessed many bright spots here at DSC. By far, our DSC employees have been shining stars amidst the darkness, and there are few who shine brighter than those in our Residential Program. Below, we will introduce a few DSPs (direct support professionals) who have volunteered to move-in temporarily to our CILAS (Community Integrated Living Arrangements). This is to provide full-time support to our residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under normal circumstances, we would have multiple employees working in shifts in each home. However, as the COVID-19 crisis emerged, DSC's clinical team determined that the safest for all involved, including residents and employees, would be to limit the number of people coming and going from the homes.

"We have worked hard to limit the exposure to our staff and the individuals we support during this pandemic. We sent a request in late March to staff to determine if anyone would be interested in temporarily relocating to one of our group home for 30 days. We had no idea what the response might be and were amazed when we were able to staff four of the group homes. The sacrifice that our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) made in leaving their own homes and families to ensure that the individuals we support were safe and healthy was admirable. Thank you does not begin to describe how truly grateful we are!"  
-Danielle Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, DSC

What these employees are doing right now has never been done before. They are pioneering and they are DSC Superheroes! Here's what three of our employees have to share about their experiences so far: Jordan Humphrey, a DSC employee who is currently working the Live in Model, decided to do so out of concern for the residents. "I wanted to make sure they were safe and I knew that I didn't have any children, or important pets at home to take care of, and that made me someone who could handle staying in one place for a long period of time. Living with the residents for nearly two months really put us in their shoes. We have shared, every meal, every med pass, every movie, and every bed-time. Chances are, when they've been bored, staff have been bored too, and when staff has felt overwhelmed, the residents have, too. By being tuned into their daily lives, we have made progress in areas that have been stagnant for months, and discovered new ways for the people to grow." Jordan's perspective highlights the innovations that are developing in real time, which will continue to evolve in the days to come because of the work and sacrifice happening during this pandemic.

Here's what employee Kendall Johnson, who provides one-on-one support for another individual had to share: "Well, we've been having daily dance parties when we aren't out driving around town, also walking the cat outside when the weather is nice, and watching every Scooby Doo movie that's available to stream. We drive around town and go by each of the CILAs to wave to our friends, sometimes we wave to Bradley, Clark, and Philo Rd buildings." Kendall volunteered to work during this time because he's previously worked one-on-one with the resident he's providing support to now, so he thought he would be a good fit. Most importantly, he felt that it simply needed to be done.

Jodi Hill, another DSC Direct Support Professional said that she chose to accept the live in position because the individuals she supports at DSC are like family to her. "Living here has been fun! We have been keeping ourselves busy with long drives, park walks, fishing at Clinton Lake, Homer Lake, Lake of the Woods and Crystal Lake. We've been walking my dog everywhere, listening to good music, playing video games, and watching WWE! Quarantine isn't gonna stop us from having our fun!"

DSC is so proud and appreciative of our employees and we thank everyone involved for the continued efforts and commitment at this crucial time. Thank you for all that you do every day on behalf of our mission, and most importantly, the people who receive DSC services.



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**Mission:** DSC supports people in living a rich and meaningful life.

**Vision:** Striving to assure that every person lives a full life in the community.

## Thank You Community Mask Makers!



We are grateful to have received so many masks in recent weeks, both for adults and children. One of the mask makers is Theresa Lueth, Aunt to Sarah Perry, DSC's Residential Program Director. Theresa is a former OSF employee and she became interested in making the masks for their staff. It didn't take long before friends and family also inquired about the masks, as the need for everyone to wear them became more apparent. So, when her niece, Sarah Perry, told her DSC was in need of masks, she was honored to make some. Like several of those who have donated masks to DSC, Theresa is a quilter and already had the fabric at home and some elastic to get started, but not enough on-hand to make the total number of masks she's made.

Due to the increased demand for masks and the size of elastic required for making the masks, the elastic was hard to purchase for a period of time. A resident of Philo, Illinois, Theresa put out a request in a local Philo watch group on Facebook requesting the elastic she needed. Within a short amount of time, others had gladly stepped up to donate the elastic and she had what she needed to continue sewing the masks. "I enjoy it. It's a way I can be involved in what's happening. You don't want to watch what's going on and feel like there's nothing you can do to help."

## Welcome Tracy!



Tracy Varrecchia is the new Residential RN for DSC. After beginning her career as a CNA, Tracy was an LPN for six years and recently received her RN. She's worked predominately in the long-term care industry and she's excited to be a part of DSC's community residential program. Tracy shared she's looking forward to the team

approach at DSC. As a parent of a child with Down syndrome, Tracy brings an invaluable perspective as she embraces DSC's Mission both personally and professionally. Welcome, to DSC, Tracy! We're glad you're here.

## Storytime and More with Parent Wonders



*Pictured: 2-Time Amazing Race Contestant who recently ran for Congress, Film Producer, and Co-Founder of the TN Holler, who recently read If You, Give a Mouse an iPhone, by Ann Droyd during the Parent Wonders Storytime*

The Parent Wonders program at DSC is a free, home-visiting program for parents with children, prenatal-to-three years of age. The program staff has been busy during this time of sheltering-in-place, working to provide remote programming, in addition to a variety of other tasks they're not always able to do. They've been hosting evening, storytime sessions, along with other new content on their Parent Wonders Facebook page. The featured picture books of the evening are being read by DSC employees, community members and even a few celebrities! Readers have included Champaign Mayor, Deborah Feinen and Actors and Actresses from Los Angeles and New York. That's not all! The entire Family Development Staff have been utilizing technology to provide therapy over phone, video and email. They've even distributed activity kits to families, so they could later do activities together online!



*Pictured: Activity kit assembled by the Family Development Team and delivered to families for online programs.*

Be sure to watch the DSC and Parent Wonders Facebook pages for upcoming, virtual events, both for you and your children to enjoy. To find, go to your Facebook search bar and type in Parent Wonders. If you, or someone you know would like more information about Parent Wonders, please contact Family Development Director, Nicole Sikora at (217) 356-9176.

# GET INVOLVED

## Shop at Target & Earn for DSC



Have you voted for us through Target Circle? If not, there's still time! See how you can help direct Target's

giving to benefit our organization and the community: [target.com/circle](https://target.com/circle)

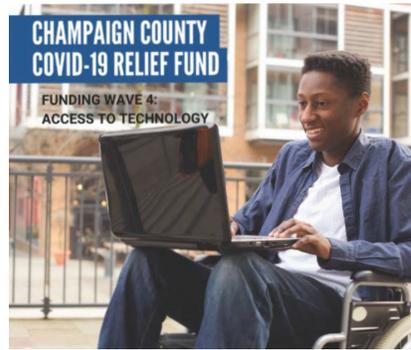
## Wishful Thinking

Our Residential Program is in need of commercial grade vacuum cleaners. Our vacuums get a lot of use and the models made for home use, aren't as durable as we need for our CILAS (Community Integrated Living Arrangements). We would like to purchase 10 commercial grade vacuum cleaners. Approximate cost: \$300 each. Please contact DSC Grants & Marketing Coordinator, Stephanie Davenport about this DSC Wish List item, if you'd like to help out.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Watch for the Mid-Year Appeal Coming in July!

## Thanks to You!



DSC received \$5,000 from the Champaign County COVID-19 Relief Fund. The funds will be used to purchase iPads to support telehealth, virtual learning, and social connections with family and friends.

Technology has been a critical need to maintain these important connections during this time. Thank you, donors and Champaign County COVID-19 Relief Fund!

## LEAP NEWS

### Four New Trained Employers!

LEAP is a free, one-hour, training on disability employment for employers in Champaign County. Contact Leslie Olson at [lolson@dsc-illinois.org](mailto:lolson@dsc-illinois.org)

- Wagner Machine Company
- OmniProsthetics
- Surface 51
- Regency Multi-Family

## Bequests

To those friends who wish to help assure the longevity of DSC by mentioning DSC in your will, the following statement may be shared with your advisor to designate a legacy bequest for the children and adults at DSC, Champaign, IL, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation:

"I give, devise, and bequeath to the DSC Foundation (37-1023944) of Champaign, IL, a charitable not-for-profit foundation, the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$\_\_\_\_) or \_\_\_\_\_ percent (\_\_\_\_%) of my estate to be used to carry out its mission."

To view or download a copy of DSC's Planned Giving Opportunities Brochures, please go to this link

[http://www.dsc-illinois.org/get\\_involved/Leave\\_A\\_Legacy.html](http://www.dsc-illinois.org/get_involved/Leave_A_Legacy.html).

Contact your tax professional for more specific tax information. If you would like more information from DSC, please contact Jodie Harmon, Director of Development & Communications at [jharmon@dsc-illinois.org](mailto:jharmon@dsc-illinois.org) or 217.398.7110.



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