



September 9, 2018

WE APPRECIATE YOUR HARD WORK – THANK YOU FOR GIVING 100% EVERY DAY!

A Message from Matt Sturiale, President and CEO and Robin Keller, Board Chair

Hello DSPs!

Hope everyone had a wonderful summer. As you know, **September 9-15, 2018 is National Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Week** where Birch and other fellow agencies recognize the work of community providers who provide supports to people with intellectual, developmental, physical, and other disabilities.

Some may think that much of the work performed by Direct Support Professionals goes unseen, but at Birch we are well aware that **your jobs are vital to the community and the 2,000 individuals whose lives are enriched daily** by incredible men and women like you. **Whether your role in Community Services is DSP, Shift Supervisor, Medical Coordinator, Assistant Manager, Cook/Housekeeper, Job Coach, or in our Education Programs Teacher Assistant, 1:1 Aide or support staff member, you are a key part of our success and MOST IMPORTANT the success of the individuals we support each day.**

We'd like to start by saying **THANK YOU** for what you do every day to help our children and adults reach new heights. **YOU ARE THE ROCK** – present in the classroom, residence or the community - **day and night - keeping people safe and making dreams come true.** It is no secret that the demands of the job are endless and yet each day our individuals and families can **COUNT ON YOU** to be there to support them. **It is this commitment and compassion that makes Birch a great organization.**

A Direct Support Professional wears many hats. You may counsel although you are not a counselor; your work is therapeutic although you are not a therapist. Like the emergency worker, you serve and protect; like a physician, you observe, sometimes examine, and make recommendations. You are not a psychologist, yet you understand many components of behavior. When necessary, you can be a career specialist, a trainer, a customer service representative, and a teacher. You are also a student constantly learning new lessons so you can be your best. **You are all of the above while empowering the individuals we support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and ensuring their participation and enjoyment of a fulfilling life.**

This week, **we applaud you and your profession of direct support.** Your profession requires a range of personal qualities in addition to competencies. While your role requires a variety of skill sets – the most important mandate is that you have **compassion, enthusiasm, commitment, flexibility, creativity and sound judgement** to support those in your classroom or program. **You are an advocate** – empowering others or lending a voice to those unable to speak for themselves. **Your passion is the commitment to the students, adults and families** with whom you build relationships, teach academic and life skills, and foster social and community connections with along the way.

We hope you understand the important a role you play at Birch Family Services. **We appreciate and thank you for making a difference in the Birch community and the world.**

We will celebrate this week with various activities at your programs, spotlights featuring some of you and recognizing longevity. We will look to an organization-wide staff appreciation event later this year. Have a great week!

With admiration,

Matt

Matt Sturiale

Robin

Robin Keller