



Caring Matters

Making a difference in the lives of those with intellectual disabilities



Dear Readers,

Every day the Direct Support Professionals at The Center for Family Support perform exemplary work on behalf of the individuals with developmental disabilities and their families we support. Their hard work and dedication have helped individuals and families in innumerable ways.

Because of their efforts many of our individuals now have jobs.

Because of their work more and more people are living more independently.

Because of their commitment individuals are engaging in meaningful activities of their choosing.

Because of their skill family life has greater enjoyment and less stress.

Please join me in thanking them for all of this and more during Direct Support Professionals week starting September 13, 2015.

Sincerely,

Steve Vernikoff
Executive Director

Our Calendar

PARENT WORKSHOP

Monday September 21, 2015 3pm – 5pm

"Planning for the Future"

Linda Schellenberg, **LMSW**

Director of Community Services

Review of life planning tools, alternatives to guardianship and health decision making choices.

LOCATION:

The Center for Family Support

333 7th Ave 9th Fl

New York, NY 10001

RSVP Brittney Riley – 212-629-7939

Ext. 400 or Briley@cfsny.org

Spanish Translation will be available.

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And the Employee of the Year Award goes to...

Terry Charles of Canarsie Named NY Employee of the Year

Steven Vernikoff, Executive Director of the Center for Family Support (CFS), recently announced Terry Charles, a Canarsie resident, as the 2014 CFS NY Employee of the Year. Mr. Charles is a Medical Coordinator with the agency and was also the agency's Employee of the Month in December.

"It gives me great pleasure to recognize Terry Charles as the 'best of the best' and to bestow this distinctive award upon



him. His contributions over the past twelve months have made him the clear winner this year," Vernikoff explained.

Nominated by his Supervisor, Merrill Brandt, Mr. Charles is described as demonstrating an exemplary work ethic by his peers and service recipients and their families have acknowledged this dedication. Mr. Charles is known as a team player and does not hesitate to provide hands on support to other medical coordinators. When new service recipients move into the Residential Home where Mr. Charles is employed, he will voluntarily assist them with the moving process and help them get organized by inputting their medical information into the system the agency uses to monitor this information.

"Mr. Charles is an asset to this organization and unquestionably has the potential to enhance his growth within the agency," explained his Supervisor.

Just as Mr. Charles gives his all for the people he serves, so he does for his community. Born and raised in a vibrant Canarsie neighborhood, Mr. Charles attended John Wilson 211 Junior High, and Canarsie High School, where he graduated in 1991.

A parishioner of Holy Family Church, where he received his Confirmation, he espouses the work of a family-oriented resident and continues to provide supports to his mom, who also resides in Canarsie.

Additionally, he provides support and encouragement to the youth in his neighborhood and has earned their respect as well as the respect of adults where he lives.

Pauline Small of Somerset Wins NJ Employee of the Year

According to Steven Vernikoff, Executive Director of the Center for Family Support (CFS), Pauline Small, has been chosen as the 2014 NJ CFS Employee of the Year. Her direct supervisor nominated her and she was chosen from a pool of over 250 of her peers.

"Pauline Small has a tremendous story of helping individuals in

group homes achieve success. Her inherent need to help others, coupled with her warm personality and



dedicated work ethic are the qualities that we have come to rely upon and we are very pleased to be able to reward her extraordinary effort with this honor," stated Vernikoff.

Pauline began her career with CFS in October of 2001. Hired for the 3pm-11pm shift in the CFS Somerset Residential Home, she has remained there for the past 14 and a half years. Pauline's supervisors say that right from the start it was clear what a caring, dedicated, and devoted individual she was and she continues to make the Somerset Residential Home a warm and comfortable place to live and work.

Pauline's main goal has always been a simple yet powerful one: to improve the lives of the individuals she worked with by providing the assistance they need on a daily basis. During Pauline's tenure at CFS she has been faced with challenging situations and in all cases, she has reacted and responded in a truly professional manner. Pauline's determination to help improve the quality of life for her service recipients has remained a constant. Those who live in the Somerset Residence continue to count on her to help them take on new challenges and achieve their goals, whether they wish to master a new domestic task, or join the workforce in their community.

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CFS Direct Support Professionals Gain Valuable Insight at National Conference

By: Maria Torres, DSP, The Center for Family Support

I was fortunate to be offered the opportunity to attend the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, on May 30 and 31st.

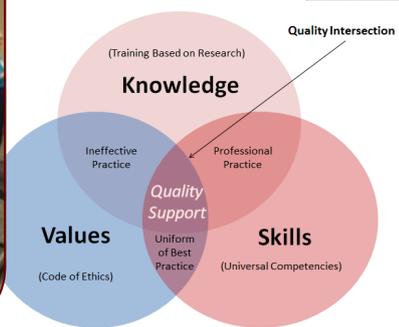
During this two day event we learned how to create a culture of competence and meet the future workforce demands. Joseph Meth, Executive Director of the NADSP spoke about supporting people with disabilities and really meeting their needs. Another topic of discussion included how much community-based services that are provided to organizations can transform their culture from caregiving to providing support.

The topic of the DSP Code of Ethics saw us role-playing with speaker, John Raffaele, who chose some of us to act out ethical dilemmas we face on the job daily. To my surprise, I was one of those chosen to participate in the role-playing exercises. The situation posed to me was one which involved an individual who wanted to get a tattoo of his girl friend. I had to help *him* make the right choice. I reinforced the fact that a tattoo is permanent, while not appearing to be too forceful. The presentation and role-playing situations are not in our handbooks of the profession, but this learning session will assist me to continue to secure freedom, justice and equality for all of our individuals we serve.

A third presentation called Brand New Day, was set to music, and illustrated with photographs, and focused on creating a DSP-centric organization that would ensure that those receiving support have access to highly skilled direct support professionals.

The closing presentation featured Amy Hewitt, PhD, RTC from the University of Minnesota who discussed the past, present and future of the NADSP. We reflected upon the direct support workforce and the contributions both we and NADSP have made to improve the outcomes, quality of life and have helped to build the capacity of community living and participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This was an amazing opportunity and I'm so grateful that I was chosen to participate.



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Self-Advocacy Group Results in Voices Heard, Dreams Realized

The idea of an advocacy group originated with service recipients expressing their desire to have their own avenue to talk about their dreams and to push changes, in conjunction with the CFS commitment to the person centered process.

The group, calling themselves Self-Starters, was established in 2011 and saw twenty five people attend the first meeting. A mission statement, 'giving a voice to those who have been silent' was determined and continues to guide the group today.

The group's name was based on the philosophy that advocacy starts with the ability to do for yourself. An election system was established that would guide future leadership teams of Board Officers and Members. The originating Board served for two years and the second set of officers is now in place.

Says current President, Thea Lindeman, "Being President of the advocacy group has made a positive impact on my life, the most important being building my self-confidence and morale. This position also has allowed me to be the voice for those individuals who do not have a voice of their own. This gives me great joy, and I am hoping that one day I will be able to make a positive impact in someone else's life. I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone who believed in me and elected me as their President and I look forward to continuing to carry out this role."



Thea Lindeman
Self-Starters President

On the State level the Self-Starters are supported by The Self Advocacy Group of New York State, and representatives attended all the initial CFS meetings and taught the participants how to be an effective self-advocacy group. Year one was spent with group members attending various community charitable events and learning more about the self-advocacy process. Since those early days, the CFS Self-Advocacy group has made great strides in affecting agency change and making contributions in their communities. Standing sub committees that address Human Rights, Incident Review, Workforce Development and Natural Resources were formed and are staffed by service recipient volunteers. Currently the Self-Starters boasts 75 members, who each participate in the activities that are meaningful to them. More and more, advocates are speaking up, making their dreams known and pushing for changes to support their ever-changing needs.

To learn more about the latest developments on this front, the Self-Starters just attended an advocate's education course taught at CFS, in collaboration with the State of New York's Self-Advocacy Group.

In the last four years, CFS has seen many individuals expressing that the self-advocacy experience has enabled them to help them find their voice. The group continues to grow in scope and ability, with the ongoing support of the Associate Director of Residential Services and several key managers.

About The Center for Family Support

The Center for Family Support was founded in 1954 by parents who were looking for in-home assistance as an alternative to institutional placement for their family members with developmental disabilities. At that time, the agency provided respite services in New York City primarily for families with children with developmental disabilities. Currently celebrating their 60th anniversary, The Center for Family Support has stayed true to their mission and today offers respite services for those with intellectual disabilities in Manhattan and the five Boroughs as well as communities in central and northern New Jersey.

The Center for Family Support is committed to providing support and assistance to individuals with developmental and related disabilities, and to family members who care for them.

To achieve this mission, CFS:

- Supports individuals to live the lives they want.
- Respects diversity, individual choice and overall family needs.
- Provides families with the support they need at all stages of life.
- Involves individuals in their communities.
- Delivers excellent, individualized support to all.

For more information about the Center for Family Support kindly visit our website www.cfsny.org

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