

Helping people with disabilities flourish and live full and abundant lives

**1st Half  
2020**

The  
**COMPASS**  
So that our mission is never lost...

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Trinity's mascot Lillie Leapit congratulates Allyson Corry, Marquita Winston and Jenifer Meehan for sheltering-in-place for six weeks at a house to keep six women safe.

**Virtual Trinity Triumph 5K**

**DSPs make personal sacrifices to ensure health, safety of those they support**

**W**hen the harsh realities of the COVID-19 pandemic began to hit home in Illinois, Trinity Services staff members did not shy away from the challenge.

They read the same news articles, saw the same posts and pictures circulating on social media, and faced many of the same fears that most people did. Yet, they came to work, and they continue to come in, with the mission of helping people with developmental disabilities and mental illness flourish and live full and abundant lives.

**Making sacrifices for the people they support**

Approximately 150 of Trinity Services'

direct support professionals (DSPs) who care for people with developmental disabilities made the selfless choice to move into community-integrated living arrangements (CILAs), or group homes, during the COVID-19 pandemic to shelter in-place there and continue to care for the people they support. In doing this, they are providing the greatest amount of protection possible to 52, or just more than half, of Trinity's residential locations and about 300 people who live in these homes.

That is approximately 150 DSPs who sacrificed going home to their loved ones and so many of the small joys and freedoms that come with being in one's own home. They

*(Continued on pages 4-5)*



Though we cannot be together in person this year, we still want to run together in spirit, in support of people with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Join us for the Virtual Trinity Triumph 5K, and get a T-shirt with the above design!

[www.TrinityTriumph.com](http://www.TrinityTriumph.com)

# Letter from the President of the Board



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Dear Friends,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and well.

The past few months at Trinity Services have been challenging and unlike anything the organization has experienced before in its 70 years of existence. The coronavirus pandemic created disruptions, uncertainties, fear, loss, and so many other obstacles for us to overcome.

As is everyone in the world, we are still getting through this pandemic. Trinity staff members do everything they can to ensure the safety, health and well-being of the people with developmental disabilities and mental illness whom they support. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are more likely to develop serious complications from the coronavirus, and this fact is not one that Trinity staff take lightly.

As you saw in the cover story, an overwhelming 150 direct support professionals moved into group homes to support people in roughly half of Trinity's residential locations. This shelter-in-place staffing model allowed people to remain as safe as possible through the elimination of shift changes. The way that countless members of the Trinity team have stepped up throughout this pandemic is worthy of shouting from the rooftops.

Staff who typically work in Community Day Services, or Trinity's day programs, were unable to report to their normal work sites due to their temporary closure. These staff members, without hesitation, helped out in residential locations. Staff members created curriculum around the Council on Quality and Leadership's 21 Personal Outcome Measures for people to engage in from home each week. Transportation staff helped drive these materials to homes.

Staff worked to help people through

difficult emotions created by the pandemic and the change in routine, and they helped people stay connected with family and friends through technology.

Trinity Counseling Center staff provided free mental health consultations to staff members and members of the general public in the center's coverage area during Illinois' stay-at-home order. School staff created remote lesson plans for students, conducted a remote graduation and made weekly socially distanced visits to students' homes to ensure they were doing well. Administrative staff created masks for direct support colleagues and staff organization-wide. Trinity's Homeless Support Program continued to provide housing assistance, responding to increased needs created by the pandemic. Additionally, though it fortunately was not needed, Trinity's Illinois Crisis Prevention Network prepared an internal site for emergency sheltering for use by other organizations.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of the selfless actions that Trinity staff have taken and continue to take to support people through this pandemic. I am so proud of all Trinity staff members who continue to report to work, and go above and beyond for the people they serve.

I also want to give my sincerest gratitude to all of our selfless family members, friends, supporters and neighbors who have made monetary donations and donations of supplies over the past few months. The pandemic created financial uncertainties, but despite this, so many of our supporters chose to share their resources with the people Trinity supports. Thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do.

Together, we truly are Trinity Strong.

Sincerely,

Raymond D. McShane,  
Chairperson of the Board



# Harold Williams remembered for his kindness, creativity

**K**ind, funny, creative. These are a few of the words that come to mind when people remember Harold Williams.

Williams was a beloved member of the Trinity community. He passed away from complications due to COVID-19 on April 22, at the age of 58, and he is dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Williams was born on January 15, 1962, and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His parents passed away when he was a child, and he lived with siblings and his aunt until he was an adult. He moved into a community-integrated living arrangement but unfortunately struggled there and moved to Elizabeth Ludeman Developmental Center in April 1993.

Since October 1, 1996, Williams received support from Trinity Services. Over the years, he lived in Mokena, Sauk Village and Crete. Most recently, he was supported by Trinity's Residential Network III.

Staff members who worked with Williams remember fondly his sense of humor and how much he loved crafting, religion, and singing and dancing to his favorite songs.

Williams' biggest hobby was crafting. He loved to spend time in his room creating dolls. He sought out parts for his dolls wherever he went and was very creative in the materials he would use.

"He would beam with pride when he showed off his vast collection," said Mickey Gossen, director of Residential Network III.

Independent Living Coach Joy Davis said she remembers how Williams would always ask her, "You got something for

me?" when he was working on clothing for his dolls.

Religion was also important to Williams. He enjoyed going to church as often as he could. Irene Hall, Williams' sister, said Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional Depriessa Fikes was sent to Williams by God early in his life, as the two attended Sunday school together. In later years, Fikes took Williams to church on Sundays.

Williams also loved music, and enjoyed singing and dancing to a wide variety of songs.

"Everyone who knew Harold loved him," Gossen said.

Team Leader Candice Jolivet remembers Williams' spirit.

"Harold was the personality of his house," she said. "He always met me at the door. Whenever he heard my voice, he would say, 'Hey, Kansas!'"

Jolivet fondly accepted the different pronunciation of her name.

"I just can't name one favorite memory of him, because every time I saw him, he made me laugh," she said. "Even if he did something that upset me, he was always quick to apologize. He never wanted to see anyone down or sad. He was always asking questions about how your day was or how your family is or just, 'Are you OK?'"

When Jolivet's grandmother died in 2017, Williams made her a gift every day for five days. He made her a beaded bracelet with the letters "HJKLPU," which he said meant, "I'm sorry your grandma went to Heaven."

"He said, 'I made it because you cry a lot now, and I don't like you crying, Kansas,'" Jolivet said. "So I'm trying very hard not to cry too much that he went to Heaven. This job is more than work to me. I try to care for each person like family. Harold passing is like a family member passing, and I'm trying to imagine his home being the same without him.

Williams liked to joke with people, and Independent Living Coach Anita Vaughn remembers Williams, in good nature, poking fun at her wigs and her singing voice.

"I remember I was taking the guys to program, and Lionel Richie's song 'All



Night Long' came on," she said. "Harold and I both started to sing. All of a sudden he turned down the volume and looked at me. I said, 'What's wrong?' He said, 'Who the hell told you that you can sing?' We both laughed so hard all the way to his program site. I hadn't laughed like that in a long time."

Independent Living Coach Zach Apt remembers Williams' ability to make people smile.

"Whether it was standing by the door waiting for me to come into work, or him coming out of his room to sing me a song he just heard on the radio and asking if I knew the song, while doing his classic Harold two-step dance move," Apt said.

Behavior Analyst Jen Russell remembers Williams for his kindness and willingness to share compliments.

"One of my favorite memories was riding the little coaster at Proud American Days," Russell said. "While we were waiting, he was so excited for the ride, taking selfies and singing church songs to me. As soon as the ride started, he said, 'I think I changed my mind.' I said it was too late, and he said, 'OK. Then I'll try not to throw up on you,' all very matter-of-fact."

Program Specialist Camilla Steczek knew Williams for a short time and remembers his creativity and how he enjoyed dressing up.

"Harold was a humble guy with lots of love," she said.



(Continued from page 1)

decided to put the people they support first to ensure that, with the elimination of staff shift changes, the people they support are as safe as possible.

Some of these staff members made the decision to stay in-place at homes where people had fevers. They knew the risk of the decisions they were making, and yet, they still chose to step in and step up. They were needed, and they answered the call.

Some of these staff members struggled with missing their loved ones, overcoming their fears of COVID-19 and even enduring the loss of loved ones during their shelter-in-place commitments. Still, they stayed.

DSPs are essential workers. They are unsung health care heroes on the front lines, providing around-the-clock care for people with disabilities and mental illness. Many of the people they support have preexisting medical conditions, putting those people at a higher risk of severe complications should they contract COVID-19. DSPs know this. They know that there is a worst-case scenario threatening to take the lives of people they care for and love, and they do everything they can to protect the people they support.

Bryce Kirwan and Steven Linton are just two front-line staff members at Trinity Services who volunteered to shelter in-place at one of Trinity's group homes in Manhattan, Illinois. Kirwan and Linton acknowledged that they did have fears about COVID-19 when they started to hear more about the disease, but on April 4 and 5, respectively, after considering the decision, both made the commitment to shelter in-place for the rest of the month. Their decision came immediately after, on April 3, one of the home's residents tested positive for COVID-19 and went to the hospital for medical care.

Both Kirwan and Linton knew there were risks involved with going to work and live at a home where someone had the virus. Kirwan worked with the gentleman who was ill for a week prior to moving in.

"It was something I wanted to do," Kirwan said. "It was easy for me to say 'yes.' It was a great sacrifice. I knew for the next 30 days, my life wasn't going to be the same at all. Everything would be different. I did my best to stay positive and optimistic. I knew that's what it would take to get through this. I knew this was what I wanted to do, and I just did it."

Linton, who has exercise-induced asthma, said he talked to his parents and his three roommates to weigh his options and talk through the risks before making a decision.

"I can't say I wasn't fearful," he said. "I read about how detrimental the virus is. I decided the attention it is getting is very important, but I can't keep living my life in fear. I have to go on and wake up and figure out what I'm doing each day. I decided this was an opportunity for me. I think I'm blessed, and God watches over me, so I wasn't too worried about it."

Both Kirwan and Linton said they relied on each other and on the five men they supported to get through the difficulties of the pandemic together. Each day, they ate meals together, did activities together, spent time outside when possible, watched TV and spent some time to themselves. Fortunately, none of the men contracted the coronavirus.

"I just knew that any time I spent giving into the fear would hold me back in the long run," Kirwan said. "I tried to keep my mind on the positive stuff and focusing on things I could control. I knew all we need is time here. If we can focus on what we can do every day and slow down and take time, we're going to make it out of this just fine."

Latoria Belcher and Michael Davis are two more staff members who decided to shelter in-place at a group home in Elk Grove Village. They stayed at the home at the end of March through the beginning of May.

No one in the home they worked at tested positive, and the pair kept it that way. They both said they were afraid of contracting the coronavirus or passing it on to their family members, friends or the people they support. That is the main reason both decided to shelter in-place at the house.

"The guys get the concept about the coronavirus," Belcher said. "We watched the news a bit, but it's kind of sad. We said there are germs outside, and we're more protected in the house right now."

Davis added that one of the men he supports frequently asked about the number of people who are infected with the virus and the number of lives lost.

"It's a fine line of trying to be truthful but also not to worry them about what's going on," he said. "For me, I'm glad we did the stay. We didn't have to worry about things like going to the gas station. Being there with the guys was safer for us and for the guys."

"It's more of a protection," Belcher added. "You're not coming into contact with the outside world, and your family is safe, too."

Belcher has a 17-year-old daughter whom she missed spending time with, and she also missed her mother and her dog. Davis is single and has no pets at home. He said he looked at sheltering-in-place as an obligation to help out his coworkers and the people he supports.

Both Belcher and Davis said the most difficult adjustment to make was getting used to giving up their sense of independence by moving in. But, as Davis put it, there's nothing you can't do on Zoom.

"I'm glad someone was there with me," Belcher said. "Two staff is better, because it's us getting to know each other. I normally work in Community Day Services, and Michael works in residential. We got to learn each other's jobs and got to know each other on a more personal level."

### Getting the job done with both hands tied

When Trinity Services and most other providers of developmental disability support services entered the COVID-19 crisis, they did so with both hands tied behind their backs.

For more than a decade, Illinois' reimbursement levels for direct support professional wages have not kept up with the cost of living and have remained at or barely above minimum wage. On average, DSPs in Illinois earn less than \$13 an hour. When Amazon warehouse workers can start at \$15 an hour, and U.S. Census workers in Cook County can earn around \$27 an hour, Trinity Services struggles to attract and keep staff members.

The extremely essential work of providing care for people with disabilities — for some, to meet their most basic human needs — is reimbursed at just \$13 an hour. This still falls below the living wage of \$13.60 for a single adult in Will County, where most of Trinity Services' residential sites are located. However, many DSPs are single mothers working to provide for their families. That living wage is \$27.39 for one adult and one child, according to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Living Wage Calculator.

Trinity Services was operating at a deficit of 20 percent of the direct support staff it needed when it entered this crisis. It is difficult to respond to a crisis



situation without a full workforce, but Trinity's staff members are extremely dedicated to the people they support. Of its roughly 1,000 staff members, just 51 people took leaves of absence since the pandemic began.

Additionally, as did many hospitals, nursing homes and care facilities, providers of developmental disability services faced a severe shortage of personal protective equipment entering the pandemic.

Trinity Services is grateful to Governor J.B. Pritzker's administration, including Department of Human Services Secretary Grace Hou, for their strong leadership throughout this crisis in working to respond to the need that Trinity Services and so many other organizations face. Despite their efforts, Trinity still struggled to obtain all of the resources it needed in a timely manner given the national shortage of essential supplies.

Trinity's ability to quickly implement its "stay-in-place" staffing model was facilitated by its strong working relationship with the leadership team of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME Council 31, Local 2690). In addition, to support DSPs who embraced this model, Trinity appreciated the collaboration and open dialogue with AFSCME Council 31, Local 2690 President Roosevelt Journigan and the entire Local 2690 executive board, as well as Kevin Watson, AFSCME staff representative, and Anne Irving, regional director.

### The true value of direct support

As the people of Illinois and people around the world continue to fight through the pandemic, the economic fallout may leave DSPs in the dust, similar to what happened during and after the Great Recession in 2008. This cannot happen again. DSPs are essential workers in essential roles that will always be needed. They make it their duty to care for some of society's most vulnerable members, and yet the pay they receive is nowhere near commensurate.

"People need to understand the value of DSPs," said Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., Trinity Services' president and CEO. "They are invaluable health care workers. They just happen to be the most underpaid health care workers, unfortunately."

Dykstra described the crisis and the loss of life that is occurring with it as the worst thing that could happen for

community providers and their staff members.

"Providers are doing their best to keep people healthy and happy," he said. "Staff members in care roles throughout the state, at nursing homes, state-operated developmental centers, care facilities, and community provider organizations like Trinity are exhibiting heroic efforts every day for the people they support. The pain and loss that is occurring when someone is lost to COVID-19 is devastating regardless of the setting."

Most of Trinity's staff members have had to work through some anxiety or fear, but they continue to rise to the occasion and show heroism in the face of a difficult, scary situation.

"Staff are showing their love for the people they support," Dykstra said. "My use of the word love is intentional and the best choice when you see the attitude and self-sacrifice and heroism of staff. I think it just points to what our staff think is important and why they have risen to the tremendous challenge presented by this crisis."

When Trinity's Community Day Services programs, also known as day programs, had to temporarily close starting in March because of the pandemic, day program staff members stayed flexible and did not hesitate to begin working in the homes. Direct support staff members walk people through structured activities that are created weekly by a hardworking team, and delivered by Trinity's transportation staff. They help people work through difficult emotions spurred by the pandemic and the change in routine. They also help people stay connected to their families and friends via video conferences.

Aside from direct support staff members, Trinity staff members in other areas of the organization have stepped up to the challenges of the pandemic.

Staff from the Trinity Counseling Center, led by Bonnie Hassan, are pro-



When DSPs finish stay-in-place shifts, they are greeted with a socially distanced celebration thrown by colleagues. Here, Tanganika White and Nicole Johnson are thanked for a 30-day shift during which they supported five women.

viding free mental health consultations to members of the local community via phone and video calls. Staff from Trinity's school program offered child care services to children of direct support staff and continued to help students learn through remote instruction. Administrative staff learned how to make masks for their direct support colleagues and made thousands over the course of a few weeks. Trinity's Homeless Support Program, led by Sandy Metroz, continues to provide housing to families in need, as well as survivors of domestic violence, as there is a great need during the pandemic. Staff members on Trinity's Illinois Crisis Prevention Network team, led by Kim Shontz, prepared an internal site for emergency sheltering for use by other organizations. Fortunately, this resource has not been needed.

"It's really brought out the best in people," Dykstra said. "Some of our program participants have communicated how appreciative they are of all that staff members are doing to keep them safe. There's no doubt that this is an unprecedented crisis, and starting with two hands tied behind our back, we're still fulfilling our mission – helping people flourish and have full and abundant lives. As CEO, I could not be more proud of our staff. There are too many heroes to list. Those individuals providing direct supports at Trinity and other organizations, are superheroes."

# Someone You Should Know

## Rhonda Housman



**“Getting to know everybody and have relationships with them is what I enjoy.”**

**W**ithout ever second-guessing or hesitating, Rhonda Housman does whatever it takes to make someone’s day better.

Housman is a team leader in Trinity Services’ Residential Network II, based in Wilmington. She has devoted the past 23 years to providing support to people with developmental disabilities at Trinity Services, and her entire career has been spent caring for others.

She grew up in the Iriquois County area in Illinois and graduated from Reed-Custer High School in Braidwood and Heartland Community College in Normal.

Upon graduating high school, Housman took a job providing direct support to people with developmental disabilities at a different organization after seeing it advertised in the newspaper. She has some relatives with developmental disabilities and was interested in the field.

“When I went into work the first weekend and met the ladies, I enjoyed working with them,” she said.

After then working briefly at a nursing home, Housman came to work at Trinity in 1997. She started as an independent living coach, or direct support professional. After serving in this role for nine-and-a-half years, she became a team leader, overseeing multiple community-integrated living arrangements, or group homes, in the Wilmington area.

As a team leader, Housman is tasked with overseeing the care pro-

vided to people in three houses, and she supervises 10 independent living coaches who provide support in those houses. She ensures every shift is filled, that the needs of the people receiving support are being met and that people are on the path to achieving their goals and pursuing their interests.

She provides supervision, ensures people get to and from doctor appointments, and takes part in leadership meetings. Prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, Housman also often took the people she supports to different places they wanted to go and to participate in different activities.

When asked what she enjoys most about her job, Housman said, simply, being able to help people.

“Getting to know everybody and have relationships with them is what I enjoy — building relationships with the people I support,” she said.

For Housman’s selflessness and constant willingness to put others first, she received the Debbie Gustafson Servant Leadership Award from Trinity Services a few years ago. This is a prestigious award given to one person each year who leads through their service to others.

“Rhonda knows the people we support incredibly well,” said Erin Malinowski, associate director of Residential Network II. “She always remembers what is important to them and truly cares about them. She will swing by on her off day to give someone a quick ride to work or check on

them because she knows that they are struggling.

“She is just as supportive of her fellow staff members, and when she sees a way to make someone’s life easier, she just does it. Rhonda embodies everything it means to be Trinity Strong.”

Even in the face of challenges, Housman puts the people she supports first. Sometimes, she works very long days to ensure that people are properly cared for.

“There are times when it’s difficult, but I think it’s just something that has to be done,” she said. “And someone has to do it.”

Housman said it helps knowing she can call on the support of her fellow team leaders. They help each other out whenever they are able and have the bandwidth to do so.

She said it is important for people to keep a good sense of humor when they are just starting out in the field or as team leaders, specifically.

“You could be having a bad day, but if you can find something that will make you laugh, it helps,” she said.

In the future, Housman looks forward to taking a vacation and possibly going back to school to further her education.

In her free time, she enjoys visiting with family and taking trips to Chicago to walk around or see Navy Pier.

Because of Housman’s continued leadership and support, Trinity Services and Residential Network II are certainly stronger.

*“Happiness doesn’t come through selfishness but through selflessness. Everything you do comes back around.” ~ Unknown*



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**Proceeds benefit Trinity Services, Inc.**  
 Helping people with disabilities so that they may flourish and live full and abundant lives



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# Trinity Services celebrates achievements of people with disabilities, mental illness at inaugural Ta-Da Awards Gala

A crowd of more than 150 people gathered to celebrate each other's achievements and cheer each other on at Trinity Services Inc.'s inaugural Ta-Da Awards Gala held February 27 at ROXY Special Event Venue in Lockport.

Trinity proudly rejoiced over the many achievements of people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs who receive support from the organization by rolling out the red carpets, serving up the sparkling juice and turning up the fun music at the event.

Guests of honor were men and women who received a Ta-Da Award in 2019. These awards are written for people receiving support from Trinity Services who attain or make progress toward personal goals, improve their health, increase their independence, learn new skills, or show kindness to others. Nominations come from Trinity staff and peers, and are approved by a committee whose members travel to award-winners' homes and programs to present the awards.

The committee is composed of people receiving support from Trinity as well as Trinity staff members. The committee worked to design the Ta-Da Awards from the ground up. The committee's goals are to inspire, empower, encourage and support people.

At Trinity Services, recognition is an essential part of the culture. It is impor-

tant to celebrate people's achievements, no matter the size or scope, as each achievement is a very personal part of a person's journey.

For example, one man who is passionate about art planned an educational trip to Joliet Junior College to view their art exhibit. He planned this on his own and followed through, asking questions and expressing his thoughts about the artwork.

Another man learned to use self-checkouts at the grocery store independently.

Additionally, one woman chose to open her room and her heart when another person needed respite care. She agreed to share her room for more than a week.

"Out of my almost 15 years at Trinity, the Gala was one of the most memorable, most meaningful experiences I've had the pleasure of being part of," said Jen Klouse, Trinity's Director of Admissions and Ta-Da Committee Chairperson. "I think one of the most important things we can do in life is celebrate each other and do that together.

"My heart was full of joy. There was not a single person in the room that wasn't smiling or laughing or dancing or having fun. That's what life is all about is capturing those moments together and just being in the moment together."

In 2019, 121 Ta-Da Awards were given at Trinity. When these awards are presented, the Ta-Da Committee plays "Celebration" by Kool & The Gang, and walks into a program announcing who they are there to see. When possible, the person who nominated the recipient is present to read the nomination and give the award-winner his or her official Ta-Da certificate. Then, the recipient may choose a prize. The cheers for award-winners during



Ta-Da Committee Member Kara Szurgot (second from left) takes a photo with award winners (left to right) Anna Rezek, Tanya Beaudry and Kim Raymond.

these presentations reverberate throughout the room.

For many people supported by Trinity Services, party invitations and special occasions to dress up are very exciting. The joy that filled the ROXY during the Ta-Da Gala was apparent, as people enjoyed catered food and a bustling dance floor.

Award-winner Nicole Martin, who received a Ta-Da Award in 2019 for learning to transfer out of her wheelchair independently, said she was so happy to be part of the Ta-Da Gala and grateful to be recognized.

"When a group of people come together and have the same goal in mind, knowing the importance and value of the awards and the Gala, we were able to achieve the success of seeing people experience a joy that is difficult to capture in words," Klouse said.

Klouse said she was grateful for the committee members, volunteers and staff members who made the awards possible throughout 2019 and ensured the success of the Gala.

"My hope is that we will continue to have so many Ta-Das that we will need a venue twice as big next year," she said. "I hope each of us continues to take time to recognize those meaningful moments with the people we serve and celebrate them, and that we continue to help them achieve the goals and experiences that are meaningful to them."



Ta-Da Award winners Tim Gunter (center) and Greg Wettour (far right) take a photo with, left to right, Trinity Services President and CEO Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., Trinity Residential Network III Director Mickey Gossen, and Trinity COO Tina Fogarty.



# National disability provider association names Trinity Services' Jacque Anderson 2020 Illinois Direct Support Professional of the Year

Jacque Anderson makes it her mission each day to help at least one person she supports experience a sense of accomplishment. On April 16, Anderson was honored for an accomplishment of her own, as she was named the 2020 Direct Support Professional of the Year for Illinois by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR).

Anderson has provided support to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities as an Independent Living Coach, or Direct Support Professional, at Trinity Services for eight years. She describes herself as someone who likes to try new things and have new experiences, and she uses this aspect of her personality to help the people she supports have more experiences, as well.

In receiving this recognition, Anderson joins 54 other recipients of ANCOR's 2020 Direct Support Professional of the Year awards, chosen from a field of 300 nominees.

Anderson supports a group of approximately 20 men who attend Trinity's Community Day Services program New Lenox Woodworks. At the program, the men contribute to the creation of wooden items like Adirondack chairs, picnic tables, candle holders, decorations and more. These items are sold to the public, and proceeds help support the program.

Though the program has a variety of staple items that people take interest in year after year, Anderson always thinks outside of the box. She comes up with new project ideas for the men she works with, as well as new ideas for what they can do during downtime.

"I had them build dream catchers and taught them about Native Americans," she said. "We've cooked brownies and cookies together. If there's something we haven't all experienced, we try it together."

Regardless of a person's abilities, Anderson finds a way to get everyone involved in the day's activities. She also continually pushes herself outside of her comfort zone around the men she supports, creating a comfortable environment

for them to try new things, too.

This innovative approach to work and life is why Anderson's supervisor, Ryan Nieders, nominated her for the DSP of the Year Award.

"She's a very hard worker and very energetic," he said. "She brings a ton of ideas to the table during our morning meetings or individually with me. She is always coming up with things to do for our program participants. She is pretty much always smiling and telling jokes or just making people laugh, in general."

Trinity Services' Director of Community Day Services Stephanie Behlke Leigh added, "Jacque is creative and always thinking of ways to bring additional depth and content to our programs. She has a talent for exploring personal interests and developing an activity or experience to connect with people."

Anderson credits Nieders for allowing her to express her creativity. She said he never puts boundaries on her ideas and always encourages her and the program participants at New Lenox Woodworks to try new things.

One man who struggled with verbalizing his thoughts would get frustrated because of this. Anderson decided to learn sign language alongside him, teaching him three words each day and making a game out of the learning experience. He caught on quickly.

Anderson has taken the men on a hike to Starved Rock State Park, taught them how to make winter hats out of yarn, helped them create artwork for their game room at New Lenox Woodworks and so much more.

"Jacque is a lifelong learner eager to take on any new skill, and she helps to instill this value in the people around her," Leigh said. "If you are around Jacque, you will grow, and you will flourish."

"They teach me as much as I teach



Trinity Services Independent Living Coach Jacque Anderson (front) poses for a photo with men she supports (left to right) Robert Brown, Sam Challa, Charles Paslawski and Brian Zon.

them," Anderson said of the men she supports. "It's a give and take. I come away learning something I didn't know, and they come away learning something they didn't know. I enjoy that they're willing to try new things and explore with me.

"I want them to have a sense of accomplishment each day. If I get one person to accomplish something, I did my job."

Though Anderson is currently unable to work with the men she normally supports because of the coronavirus pandemic, she continues to support people with disabilities by helping out in a residential location. She also continues to go above and beyond. When she and her colleagues were running low on disinfectant, Anderson made a special early morning trip to the store to buy some.

"We are so proud of Jacque for all the creativity and genuine care she brings to the people she supports," said Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., president and CEO of Trinity Services. "Jacque has brightened the days of program participants and her colleagues for years, and this recognition is well-deserved. We are grateful that ANCOR chose to recognize Jacque at this level."

# Trinity parent, Board Member Ron Stricklin receives award for advocacy efforts from The Arc of Illinois

Trinity Services, Inc. is proud to announce that Ron Stricklin, a member of the Trinity Services Board of Directors and parent of a son supported by Trinity, received the Outstanding Family Member Advocate Award from The Arc of Illinois.

This award is given to family members who actively devote time and energy to enhance the life experience for their family member and all people with developmental disabilities. Stricklin has done this through years of advocacy and volunteer work.

The award was presented to Stricklin virtually on June 11 during The Arc of Illinois' 70th Annual Convention.

Jen Hodges, director of Trinity's Residential Network VII in the Des Plaines area, has known Stricklin for years and wrote his nomination. She said he has been a tireless advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since he learned his son was diagnosed with a rare disorder called Char syndrome.

"He helped his son move into his cur-

rent home in 2005, is an active member of the fundraising team, advocates at the State level, serves as a Board member and is a lead member of the Parent Advisory Committee," Hodges said. "He sees his path as not only advocating for his own son but for all people with disabilities."

Stricklin has spent hours writing letters to legislators and visiting their offices, even when they openly disagree with legislation that would help people with disabilities. He also raises funds for and donates to help people supported by Trinity take part in events and activities regardless of their financial situation.

"He has a heart of gold that radiates through all of his efforts for people with disabilities," Hodges said. "Trinity and



Trinity Services parent and Board Member Ron Stricklin (center) holds his award alongside Trinity Residential Network VII Director Jen Hodges (left) and Trinity President and CEO Thane Dykstra, Ph.D.

The Arc are excited to present Ron with the award for Outstanding Family Member Advocate."

"I want to thank The Arc of Illinois for awarding me this wonderful award," Stricklin said. "I am honored to do the work and honored to be affiliated with Trinity Services and the good work they do."

# Trinity artist Kyle Buscemi submits artwork to Arc of Illinois' 19th Annual Art Exhibit



Creating what's in his head is how Kyle Buscemi describes his artistic process and artwork.

Buscemi is an extremely talented artist who has pursued drawing and creating since he was 5 years old.

As part of The Arc of Illinois' 70th Annual Convention, the organization held its 19th Annual Art Exhibit June 8-15. Buscemi submitted the adjacent drawing to the exhibition and competition.

He primarily draws characters, but he also dabbles in painting and creating 3D paperwork figures, like cars.

"I just draw what's in my head," he said. "I draw what I'm

thinking."

Staff members who work with Buscemi said he gets excited when he sees the final result of putting what he imagines to paper.

Buscemi has submitted artwork to competitions in the past. A few years ago, he sent a piece to the Montgomery County Fair.

When asked what he enjoys most about creating artwork, Buscemi said, "It's your imagination. You can draw whatever you want."

**To view more of Buscemi's artwork, follow his art account on Instagram, @buscemikyman.**



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**\*We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions.**

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From all of us at Trinity Services, Inc., thank you to everyone who donated to help the people we support in response to or during the COVID-19 pandemic.

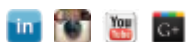
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With your help, Trinity Services was able to meet and exceed the requirements of The Coleman Foundation's \$25,000 matching grant over the past few months.

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rounded by such caring, generous friends and supporters.

Additionally, we received many dona-

tions of hand sanitizer, handmade face masks, ear savers, nonperishable food items and other essential items that helped the people we support and our staff members immensely.

The pandemic created so much uncertainty and anxiety. Despite this, our supporters continued to take action

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