

The premier community resource for people with disabilities and their families

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**SARATOGA BRIDGES ANNOUNCES DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS WEEK**

Saratoga Bridges, along with other statewide providers who NYS Office of Persons With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) coordinates services with and is the regulatory body for, is pleased to announce that September 8-14 has been designated as Direct Support Professionals (DSP) week! Join Saratoga Bridges in recognizing the dedication and accomplishments of outstanding Direct Support Professionals for their vital contribution to our community. In fact, the U.S. Senate ratified S.Res.532, which designates the week beginning September 7, 2014 as National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.

*"We are always looking for ways to expand our services. Based on what our individuals and their families ask of us, we reach out to our staff all the time to ask how we can provide better services,"* says Executive Director Valerie Muratori. She added, *"Our dedicated employees give their creativity, energy and passion to their positions, but are often unrecognized throughout the community. These individuals need to be celebrated as they provide invaluable support and services to persons with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities 24/7, 365 days a year. They are responsible for their health, safety and emotional well-being, encouraging them to live more meaningful, dignified and productive lives by promoting independence. In doing so, they positively impact the organization and raise awareness in the community of how our workforce makes a difference every day."*

Saratoga Bridges will be recognizing their devoted, committed staff members throughout the week with various activities.

**Background**

Each and every day, more than 90,000 direct support professionals across New York carry out our mission to help individuals with developmental disabilities live richer lives. From September 7-13, OPWDD joins Governor Andrew Cuomo and organizations nationwide to pay special tribute to these professionals by celebrating Direct Support Professionals Week.

During this week, an outstanding group of DSPs from throughout New York State are chosen to be honored. These professionals exemplify the NADSP Code of Ethics for DSPs by promoting --

- Person-Centered Supports
- Physical and Emotional Well-Being
- Integrity and Responsibility
- Confidentiality
- Justice, Fairness and Equity
- Respect
- Relationships
- Self-Determination
- Advocacy

They provide a broad range of supports to help keep individuals with disabilities connected to their families and live successfully in their communities, often putting the needs of others above their own. Congratulations to these OPWDD Direct Support Professionals of 2014, and thank you to ALL of New York's DSPs for your commitment to those you support.

As one of the largest non-profit organizations in the county, Saratoga Bridges has been providing programs for people with developmental disabilities and their families for more than 55 years. Throughout its' history, family members, staff and volunteers have been committed to ensuring that the individuals they serve are able to realize their goals, hopes and dreams. They remain steadfast in their ability to offer the highest level of lifetime services to 800 people, by promoting their abilities, contributions and achievements in every aspect of community life. Saratoga Bridges' philosophy is that every day is full of possibilities!

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