



LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS: SPECIAL DSP WEEK EDITION

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington staff members,

This Sunday, September 13, marks the beginning of the 2020 National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week. It is an honor for us to celebrate you and all that you do for the people we support. This week is national recognition for our dedicated

workers who, through building close and trusted relationships with the people we support, help them realize their goals and dreams...every single day.

You are truly family to the people we support and their family members – you are essential in ensuring that people with developmental disabilities live a fully productive life of their own choosing. You make it happen...every single day.

We hope you enjoy your special week and all that your managers and supervisors have specially planned for you. We are so grateful to you always, but especially through these trying past six months. You persevered and remained committed to our mission, you dealt with myriad changes to programs, services and supports, but you stayed the course and helped individuals deal with all these changes that they sometimes did not understand. But with your caring, thoughtful, supportive ways you helped make an ordeal seem like fun. We saw and heard countless stories of how you went above and beyond to make sure everyone was safe, happy and healthy....every single day.

- You helped people understand the importance of social distancing, masks, hygiene and keeping each other safe,
- You helped people celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, retirements and many other successes and milestones,
- You helped people visit with their families and friends, virtually and through windows, when the pandemic wouldn't allow face-to-face interaction,
- You came together with new co-workers from different departments to seamlessly support people through the pandemic and stay-at-home orders,
- You helped acclimate and welcome new people to our agency,

MANAGERS:

Please post/share this information with your staff.

Does your program have an event/information you'd like listed here?

Please send all information to Megan Balser (balserm@thearclexington.org)

at least two weeks in advance of the event. For community events in Fulton or Albany Counties, please visit the links below.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

FULTON COUNTY:
fultonmontgomeryny.org
44lakes.com

ALBANY COUNTY:
albany.com/events/
events.timesunion.com

- You supported students through their new virtual world and were proud to see them continue their education and even to graduate,
- You helped people cook new recipes, create crafts to celebrate special holidays, create artwork to adorn walls and tables, and helped people redecorate and redesign rooms and homes,
- You mentored college and high school interns to show them what a great DSP can do to support and help advocate for people,
- You helped people plant gardens and grow vegetables, plant trees and enjoy the summer sun and weather,
- You helped people take virtual classes in art, music, drawing and painting, and get support services online,
- You continue to keep people on their wellness track, going for walks, keeping active and eating healthy, keeping people motivated,
- You helped people create cards and sentiments and support to send to friends who lost members of their Lexington family,
- You helped people with new hairstyles, new nail colors and makeup, and helped people feel their best,
- You delivered activity bags and sunshine to people we support at their family's home in the community.

You are helping the people we support, and each other, through each new change and challenge with a level of calm, caring and love that we didn't think possible. But you amaze us and the people you support...every single day.

Over the past few months, Dan and I have had the opportunity to visit each of our homes – to bring staff members care kits and to bring bubbles and ice cream on another visit. We were truly blessed not only to be able to visit with many of you, but to see first-hand the relationships you have built with the people we support and one another. It truly feels like a family and we have you to thank.

We are grateful to you and truly appreciate you...every single day. We couldn't do what we do at the level that we do it without you.

Enjoy YOUR week. You so deserve it and more.

Sincerely,

Shaloni

RECOGNIZING OUR EMPLOYEES—NOMINATIONS DUE BY SEPTEMBER 30!

It's that time of the year again! Let's recognize all of the wonderful employees we have! Do you know a staff member who truly exemplifies the goal of our Nurturing Environment program? If so, please nominate him or her for recognition! Recognizing our employees gives you the opportunity to recognize the actions of Lexington employees, to enhance the supports we provide and improve our environment. Please complete the form, found at the end of this newsletter or by [clicking here](#), for the employee you would like to nominate and return the completed nomination form to Terry Williams at the Gloversville Day Hab building by **September 30, 2020**. If you have any questions, please contact Terry at williat@thearclexington.org or (518) 775-5382. Please take this opportunity to nominate and recognize Lexington employees who go above and beyond every day!

WHO IS ELIGIBLE? Any staff member who goes beyond the expectations of their job and demonstrates excellence in creating, building and maintaining a nurturing environment is eligible. A staff who champions the vision of the Nurturing Environment program, with language and actions that demonstrate enthusiasm, may be nominated.

WHO CAN NOMINATE? Anyone who receives services from Lexington, their family, and/or any Lexington staff member can nominate someone for recognition.

REWARDING EXCELLENCE All nominations will be recognized at Nurturing Environment Program meetings **October 13-16**—more details TBA. Employees who stand out will be selected for an award. Last year, 200 employees received recognition awards of \$10 to \$250, plus a Certificate of Appreciation and a gift card to the Paul Nigra Center for Creative Arts, totaling over \$7,000.

LEXINGTON'S OWN TERRI SALVIONE NAMED ONE OF FOUR STATEWIDE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2020 THOMAS A. MAUL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD!



The Arc New York has announced the recipients of the Thomas A. Maul Direct Support Professional Award, and we were thrilled to learn that our own Terri Salvione was one of four chosen for this year's award! In honor of her recognition, Terri will receive a commemorative plaque as well as a cash award from The Arc New York in the amount of \$2,500.

Terri has been with Lexington for 16 years, working as a Direct Support Professional in Gloversville Day Hab for two years, then becoming a Direct Support Coordinator (DSC) for Quest II Day Hab in 2008. She worked there until September 1, 2019, when she became a residential DSC for 24 Second Avenue in Gloversville.

In her nomination, we talked about the impact that Terri has had on the people she has supported in the programs where she has worked. A couple of stories in particular demonstrate how Terri has gone above and beyond her DSP responsibilities. The first is how Terri made Taneesh Manion's 40th birthday party the party of Taneesh's dreams, supporting her in all aspects of planning. This included preparing food and decorations on her own time and setting up and prepping everything for the special day. Another story was about a person we support who had lost touch with her children for 30 years. Terri sprang into action to help find them, doing research online and helping set up a Facebook page for the search. When the family members agreed to visit from Florida, Terri picked them up at the airport and escorted them to Lexington, where they were reunited with their mother. The woman unfortunately was in poor health and died a short time later, but this reunion was truly life-altering for her. These are just two of many stories that can be told of Terri Salvione and the passion she has for her work and the people she supports.

The Arc New York, through this award, recognizes individuals who consistently demonstrate excellence, creativity and commitment in providing supports to people who have intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Candidates for this award display an exemplary level of performance over the course of his/her employment at a chapter of The Arc New York and show a commitment to improving the quality of life for people who have disabilities.

Thomas A. Maul, for whom this award is named, was a Commissioner of OPWDD from 1993 to 2006. During his tenure, he addressed many of the longstanding issues that face The Arc New York and the people the organization supports. The Arc New York shared with the Commissioner a major priority – the true recognition of its workforce.

CONGRATULATIONS to Terri Salvione – what an honor it is for her to be chosen for this statewide award! She truly represents the excellence of Lexington's DSPs. And what a testament her winning this award is to ALL of our DSPs! You all rise to the top with her as she is recognized for the quality that our agency brings in the services and programs to the people we support. She is a shining example of what ALL of you do...every single day.

A LOOK AT LEXINGTON'S DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

There are currently 1,008 Direct Support Professionals at Lexington, including those who work for Day Hab, Residential, Transitions, Clinical, Family, Employment and Support Services in Albany and Fulton Counties. Your years of service range from 44+ years (Sharon Diefendorf), 41+ years (Lori Collado) and 41 years (Tim Carver) to seven Relief Pool and four Mentor Staff members who celebrated their first day at Lexington on September 10. Together, our DSPs have amassed an amazing 8,050 years and 82 days of service supporting people with developmental disabilities!!!

YEARS OF SERVICE BREAKDOWN:

- 3 of our DSPs have over 40 years of service
- 26 have 30-40 years of service
- 39 have 25-29 years of service
- 47 have 20-24 years of service
- 92 have 15-19 years of service
- 96 have 10-14 years of service
- 153 have 5-9 years of service
- 552 have 1 day to 4 years of service

We are so proud that nearly half of all of our DSPs have been with Lexington for more than five years, reflecting their long-term commitment to the people we support!

DSP APPRECIATION TESTIMONIAL FROM DEB AND ADRIENNE PHILLIPS

Adrienne Phillips, someone supported by Lexington, and her mother Deb took time to express their appreciation for everyone who supports them at Lexington, especially in light of everything that staff have been doing during the pandemic.

Deb said, “You guys are rock stars (just like Flame is) because of all the services that you have been providing for us. I don’t know where we’d be right now. Not all heroes wear capes—some of them work with the people who need us the most. And you guys are always there and we thank you, thank you, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

Adrienne added, “You guys are all super heroes; you’re all strong and courageous. Please be brave and safe. We love all of you guys. God bless all of you guys. If it wasn’t for you guys a lot of us wouldn’t have a future right now. We would like to say our appreciation to you. We are amazed at what you guys do and you are amazing heroes. Thank you.”

Watch their moving testimonial on the Lexington Facebook page: www.facebook.com/LexingtonArc/videos/2572829549622003.

CELEBRATE DSP WEEK WITH US ON WORKPLACE!

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week is this week, September 13-19, and we are excited to spend the whole week celebrating YOU! Your managers and supervisors have a lot planned to make you feel as appreciated as you are every day. As the week unfolds, don’t forget one of the most powerful ways to connect with other coworkers throughout the agency: [Workplace!](#) If you are able, please help us celebrate DSP Week by sharing the festivities on Lexington’s page! Here are some ideas for how you can use Workplace to celebrate direct support professionals:

- Post photos of any DSP Week parties, gifts, messages and other celebrations you experience at your worksite so everyone can see how appreciated you are!
- Post photos of DSPs doing all they do to support people throughout the day—both big and small—to demonstrate how essential and caring their work is!
- If you know of a DSP who deserves particular recognition for all they do, please shout them out on Workplace and tell us all what makes them so special!
- Share stories of special moments you have witnessed that were made possible by a DSP!
- Tell us what being a DSP means to you. If you are a DSP, why do you love your job? What has it taught you? If you are not a DSP, what have you observed about our DSPs? What inspires you when you see them at work supporting people?

Thank you for helping us all stay connected through this great social media resource. If you aren’t on Workplace yet, please email to Doug Blanc at BlancD@thearclexington.org for an invitation. Come join the Lexington conversation!

DSP APPRECIATION TESTIMONIAL FROM KAREN PALMATEER-MURCRAY

Karen Palmateer-Murcay, the mother of someone Lexington supports, kindly submitted a Letter to the Editor to [The Leader-Herald](#) sharing how much she appreciates everything Lexington staff have done for her daughter. Here is what she said:

“During this time when we have been recognizing community heroes and hometown heroes, I cannot just recognize one person. Instead I look at a very important group of people that I would like to recognize. These people happen to be the Lexington employees and staff.

“These people are important to me as they have kept my daughter safe and happy during this unrepresented time. I was unable to see my daughter for a while which was a switch from seeing her every weekend. I did not know how my daughter was going to be not being able to see me but she did fine because her staff kept her busy and entertained. The staff had to come up with different routines and clever ways to keep our children busy and happy. As a result of all of this, the girls in the house have grown closer with each other and their staff. I cannot thank the staff enough for watching over my daughter and all of her friends at Lexington.

“I also would like to praise another agency that I have recently had the pleasure of getting to know and that is the people that drive Access vans. These people have been a pleasure to get to know and they have been very kind to my mom as we utilize their services.

Please continue to see all of the people in our community doing good for others and may we do good for one another also.”

#RISINGTOGETHER AT LEXINGTON!



This week, we are celebrating YOU! Here are just some of the examples of the things, big and small, DSPs do for the people we support every day, as well as some of our preliminary staff appreciation celebrations:

- *Thank you to everyone who joined us at our employee appreciation event at the Nigra Arts Center last Friday! About 400 of our amazing employees came to a socially distanced drive-in event, where they and their families enjoyed performances by Flame and Kyle Rix and sampled delicious food from Sammy's Country Wagon, The Mac Factor and Stewart's Shops ice cream! We hope that everyone who joined us on that beautiful day had a wonderful time and knows how much we appreciate them. Thanks so much to all of our volunteers who made the event go so smoothly!*
- *Bill and Taneesh Mannion celebrated nine years of marriage on August 20! Congratulations to them, and thanks so much to all the staff who helped make the day special for the couple!*
- *Pictured here are some staff from Schoharie preparing for DSP Week celebrations!*
- *Staff Terri Salvione and Jean Garhartt helped the women who live at 24 Second Ave. stay active and enjoy nature by taking them on a hike at Willie Wildlife Marsh! It was a beautiful day for some refreshing outdoor exercise.*
- *The Clinical Team has been hosting Crafty Crafts at Burke, helping people make fun and beautiful decorations for their home! Pictured here are people from Cromer Road making fall-themed buntings to hang on the wall.*
- *Earlier this year, Don moved from his longtime home at Bluebird to Park Avenue. To help him feel at home and continue to pursue his hobbies, staff Janie Griffin and Scott Gibson replicated his old workshop at Park Avenue! They worked hard setting up the space and shopping for all the tools Don will need to work on his projects. Thanks to Janie, Scott and all the Park staff for welcoming Don with open arms and making sure he is happy in his new home!*
- *Ny'Isha recently enjoyed a pampering session with emotional support staff Shadae Hayles! Shadae did a beautiful job giving Ny'Isha a great new hairstyle. Makeovers like these help the people we support look and feel their best, as well as express themselves in new ways! Thank you, Shadae!*

Nurturing Environment Program - Recognizing our Employees

NOMINATION FORM

Recognizing our Employees gives you the opportunity to recognize the actions of Lexington employees, to enhance the supports we provide and improve our environment.

Who are you nominating (please use a separate form for each employee)?

Name of Employee	Work Location

Please provide specific examples of what the nominee has accomplished, how it was achieved, and why do you consider it truly nurturing that is above and beyond his/her normal duties

You may attach additional pages if you wish.

Please print your name	Your work location	Please sign and date
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Please return completed form to Terry Williams at the Gloversville Day Hab building by September 30, 2020.