



Celebrating
**DIRECT SUPPORT
PROFESSIONALS**
Week



LEXINGTON HAPPENINGS: SPECIAL DSP WEEK EDITION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

MESSAGE FROM SHALONI



Dear Lexington Direct Support Staff member,

We hope you enjoyed all the activities and gifts you had last week for Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week! This nationally celebrated week of appreciation highlights the important work that you do as direct support professionals (DSPs) every day in supporting and empowering people we support to live their best lives.

We are especially grateful for what you have done and continue to do amidst the staffing challenges of the ongoing pandemic. Your resourcefulness, passion, sacrifices and creativity have had a life-changing impact on the lives of the people we support and their families.

It's been heartwarming to see on Workplace, and in person, all of the celebrations and the words of thanks and appreciation from across the agency. Taco Tuesday, fall-themed decorations and treats, Wacky Wednesday, and Theatrical Thursday looked like a lot of fun, but Fantastic Friday really speaks to the SUPERHEROES that each of you are.

Some of the words we collected from last week speak to how valuable you are to the Lexington Family:

"Without your hard work, dedication and compassion, we would not be able to accomplish the great things we do each day. Thank you for making the lives of the people we support better."

"Thank you to our AMAZING direct support professionals."

"You all do such an amazing job going far and beyond helping the people you support. Nothing we say or do could ever show you how much we appreciate you all."

"Thank you for the care that you provide to ensure everyone's safety, comfort, good health and happiness. Please take note that NONE of this goes unnoticed."

"Truly a small gesture for all the big things each and every one of you do day-to-day for your teams and the people you support."

"Thank you for your flexibility; thank you for ensuring every individual who lives in our home is well taken

care of and their needs are met. Thank you for being so caring.”

“To ALL of the DSPs at Lexington – THANK YOU! Be proud of the work you do, the person you are, and the difference you make!”

Thank you for being the heart and soul of Lexington. It is your work that ensures our mission is brought to life every day. We are immeasurably grateful for the work you do!

With sincere gratitude,

Shaloni

A LOOK AT LEXINGTON’S DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

There are currently 1,158 Direct Support Professionals at Lexington, including those who work for Day Hab, Residential, Transitions, Clinical, Family, Employment and Support Services in Albany, Fulton and Schoharie Counties. Your years of service range from 43+ years (Lori Collado, Northampton IRA), 38+ years (Mary Mansheffer, Employment Specialist in Schoharie) and 37+ years (Sandra Jacques, Creative Expressions, and Bonnie Downes, Employment Specialist in Fulton) to 11 new relief and full-time staff members who started at Lexington last week.

YEARS OF SERVICE BREAKDOWN (AS OF THIS WEEK):

- 1 DSP has 40+ years of service
- 41 have 30-40 years of service
- 38 have 25-29 years of service
- 59 have 20-24 years of service
- 107 have 15-19 years of service
- 106 have 10-14 years of service
- 217 have 5-9 years of service
- 589 have 1 day to 4 years of service

We are so proud that about 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!

CELEBRATE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ON WORKPLACE!

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week may be over, but it’s always a good time to highlight the contributions and achievements of our direct support staff on [Workplace](#)! Workplace is a great resource for all of us to share news, stories and special moments. We invite everyone in the Lexington family to join Workplace and post in the “Lexington Champions” and “Lexington Happenings” groups to recognize your fellow coworkers and celebrate the people you support! Here are some ideas for how to use Workplace to celebrate direct support professionals year-round:

- Post photos of any staff recognition lunches, parties, gifts, messages or other celebrations at your worksite.
- Post photos of DSPs doing special things, big and small, to support people on a daily basis and help make their lives happy and fulfilling.
- If you know of a DSP who went above and beyond to make something happen, achieved a big goal or reached a significant milestone, shout them out and tell us about what they did!
- Share stories of special moments made possible by the work of DSPs.
- If you are a DSP, tell us what your job means to you. Why do you love what you do? What have you learned from it? What advice would you give to new DSPs?
- If you are not a DSP, tell us what you notice most about great DSPs. How do they inspire you? What can we all learn from them? What do you appreciate the most about the work you see them doing?

Thanks for helping us stay connected with this great resource. If you aren’t on Workplace, please email Courtney Mickels Mickels at mickelc@theardlexington.org for an invitation. Come join the Lexington conversation!

BRIAN SHAFER—THOMAS A. MAUL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR



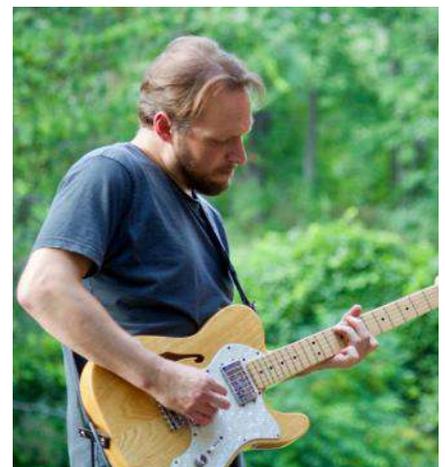
Congratulations to Brian Shafer, DSS III at Schoharie Day Hab, who was named one of the winners of The Arc New York's 2022 Thomas A. Maul Direct Support Professional Excellence Award! This award, in the amount of \$2,500, is presented annually to four DSPs statewide who are employed by a Chapter of The Arc New York. Through this award, The Arc New York recognizes individuals who consistently demonstrate excellence, creativity, and commitment in providing supports to people who have intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Candidates for the award have displayed an exemplary level of performance over the course of their employment and will have shown commitment to improving the quality of life for people with IDD.

The award is presented in honor of Thomas A. Maul, who during his tenure as OPWDD Commissioner (formerly OMRDD) from 1993 to 2006, addressed many of the longstanding issues that face The Arc New York and the people we serve. The Arc New York shared with Maul a major priority – the true recognition of its workforce.

Brian Shafer truly exemplifies these qualities and also truly lives the mission of Lexington. Brian's story began with the Schoharie Arc 13 years ago as he started his career supporting people with disabilities. More recently, what began as a change of job for Brian at Schoharie Day Hab quickly blossomed into an even more impactful one both for him and the people he supports in Schoharie. His personal love of music and his talent in the art became an amazing opportunity for people to explore and expand their own love of music, along with Brian in his journey. Today, they are recognized and celebrated for their collaborative creations and talented musical performances as "The Ear Worms."

Brian is truly the "Music Man" and so much more. The people we support gravitate to him with great enthusiasm and happiness. He listens, supports, communicates, and problem solves using what he has come to know about each person to best meet their needs. He is able to have each person spend time with him equally, so no one feels left out or that he or she is not getting enough time with him – and it is quality time that he gives to each person. He has helped the people we support develop a love for music and for life.

His fun-loving personality is infectious and the people we support, and staff that work with him, love his spontaneity and creativity. He is a role model in thought, deed, and action. Brian inspires people to do their best and to be appreciated and respected for who they are. He has made a world of difference in so many lives and his impact cannot be overstated. He is truly one-of-a-kind and the Lexington family feels so fortunate that he is a member of our team.



ANNIE STOCK—FULTON COUNTY NOMINEE



Congratulations also to the Fulton County nominee for the Thomas A. Maul Direct Support Professional Excellence Award, Annie Stock! Annie is a peer mentor with our Transitions program. She is a natural leader who has enthusiastically taken on more responsibilities as a teacher, capstone project manager and shift coordinator. Whenever students achieve goals or accomplish milestones, Annie is the first to show up to celebrate with them, even when she is not scheduled to work. She represents everything Transitions looks for in a peer mentor!