



DIRECTIONS

Direct Support Professional Association of Tennessee
"Tennessee Homegrown"

October 2008



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

One drop of water makes little impact alone, but when individual drops accumulate, they can do amazing things. Water carves out mountains, creates new valleys, and brings vegetation to places that had none before. As individual DSP's, we sometimes forget that we have that power, but today we are accomplishing tasks that were thought of as impossible just a few short years ago.

Governor Bredesen signed the Tennessee DSP day proclamation in June of 2007, and just a year later, our DSP's have been recognized by the U.S. Senate with a proclamation recognizing our workforce and its value. The United States Senate recently adopted a resolution designating the week of September 8th - 12th as National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week. This legislation recognizes and celebrates the important work that direct support professionals, direct care workers, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals provide to individuals experiencing disability.

This past June, Hilltoppers, Inc. of Crossville celebrated the first anniversary of the Tennessee proclamation by honoring their DSPs with a week of fun and festivity. DSPAT dropped in to give them a pat on the back for their outstanding work in recognizing their DSP workforce, and to take part in their celebration by presenting their DSPs with a copy of the declaration signed by Governor Bredesen.

WWW.DSPAT.ORG

A few days before the event, Executive Director Tony Cox began circulating a memo with an itinerary of the week's events along with his personal note of thanks for their hard work and dedication. The celebration began on June 2nd with a breakfast for DSP's at the main office. On Tuesday, the fun continued with fresh popped popcorn and sodas from 12 pm to 4pm. Wednesday an Ice Cream social was the event of the day from 12pm to 4pm, and Thursday was a spaghetti dinner from 4pm to 6pm.

Administrative staff showed their appreciation by cooking, serving, and delivering food to DSP's who were working and unable to attend. All day Friday, drawings were held for donated products from the community including gift certificates, food

coupons, movie tickets, visors, coolers, mugs, etc.

Over half of the Hilltoppers, Inc. DSP workforce of 160, received a donated gift on Friday, and all staff received an 'employee survival kit' that included such things as pumpkin seeds to help 'grow' personally and professionally, Laffy Taffy, to remind us that the most wasted of all days is the one without laughter, and peppermint to recognize 'commitment'



to the job.

Inspired by Hilltoppers, Inc. dedication to their employees and in celebration of United States Senate resolution 613, Michael Dunn Center celebrated by adapting the 'employee survival kits' idea and distributing employee appreciation kits to all their employees.

So, what does it take to organize an event? Lani Roberts, Professional Development Coordinator says the Hilltoppers Inc. event was planned in about two weeks, and that funding for the week's celebration was solely supplied by community businesses including local grocery stores, fast food restaurants, banks, and insurance companies.

Mike McElhinney of Michael Dunn Center recruited a few key community volunteers, who planned, collected, and organized the project in about three days with minimal costs, demonstrating that money isn't always the first consideration in DSP appreciation.

True community efforts raising awareness of DSP's and the job they do. This ripple effect.



We are thrilled to have accomplished so much this year, and are looking forward to working even harder next year. Way to go Hilltoppers, Inc., and Michael Dunn Center. We can't wait to see what you have in store for us in the future. You have raised the bar for DSP appreciation. -- Gail Abbott

ATTENTION PROVIDERS

Do you have a special way to recognize your DSP's? Did you, or are you having a special celebration in honor of the Senatorial proclamation? We want to hear about it! Please email us at gabbott@dspat.org, and let us know. You may be profiled in next month's newsletter. Releases must accompany photos.



***Deadline for all submissions: midnight on the fifteenth of each month.**



A Code of Ethics, WHY?

Laura Jernigan

Ethical Values are those such as respect, honesty, openness and responsibility. Individuals have individual and personal values. Organizations develop ethics codes to establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibilities that define what is acceptable within a specific field.

Recognizing the need to promote high standards of practice and establish a framework for professional behavior, responsibilities are discussed, developed, agreed upon and accepted as a guide to performance within the field. Putting into practice a specific Code of Ethics identifies the values of the organization and creates an occupational identity.

A professional organization is a voluntary, cooperative organization. Established most often to promote the increase of professionalism within a

particular field they often adopt a Code of Ethics. The Direct Support Professional Association of Tennessee and its members embrace and promote the following Code of Ethics, developed by The National Association of Direct Support Professionals for the DSP workforce.

- **PERSON CENTERED SUPPORTS:** As a DSP, my first allegiance is to the person I support; all other activities and functions I perform flow from this allegiance.
- **PROMOTING PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL WELL BEING:** As a DSP, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support while being attentive and energetic in reducing their risk of harm.
- **INTEGRITY and RESPONSIBILITY:** As a DSP, I will support the mission and vitality of my profession to assist people in leading self-directed lives and to foster a spirit of partnership with the people I support, other professionals and the community.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** As a DSP, I will safeguard and respect the confidentiality and privacy of the people I support.
- **JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, and EQUITY:** AS a DSP, I will promote and practice justice, fairness, and equity for the people I support and the community as a whole. I will affirm the human and civil rights and responsibilities of the people I support.

- **RESPECT:** As a DSP, I will respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support. I will recognize each person I support as valuable and help others understand their value.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** As a DSP, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain relationships.
- **SELF-DETERMINATION:** As a DSP, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.
- **ADVOCACY:** As a DSP, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

Next, Directions will explore Caregiver Advocacy.

Comments or questions?
Email me
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DSPAT is an affiliate of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals and embraces the NADSP code of ethics. For more information about joining The NADSP, go to www.NADSP.org



ARE YOU EATING HEALTHY?

Your job requires you to be diligent in helping your service recipient make good food choices, but are you making good choices for yourself?

Sometimes we get so busy we don't think about what we put in to our bodies for fuel. Listed below are some common fast food items and their average caloric content.

Large cheeseburger-----	770 cal
Small fries -----	230 cal
Small soft drink-----	140 cal
Foot long chili cheese Dog-----	600 cal
Corn Dog-----	250 cal
Reg. size vanilla shake-----	540 cal
Grilled Chicken Salad-----	310 cal
Packet of Ranch Dressing-----	260 cal
Packet of Light Ranch Dressing-----	120 cal
Grilled chicken wrap w/lite ranch-----	380 cal
Bloomin' Onion with sauce-----	2210 cal
Taco Salad-----	840 cal

Obviously there are good choices that we can make even when we're in a hurry, and a salad isn't always the best choice. Now, most restaurants offer lower fat options and even have nutritional information posted for reference.

We are required to help others make good choices, so let's use that knowledge to enhance our lives. After all, our individual health is our most valuable asset.

Did You know?

It only takes 3500 calories to gain one pound.

Why wash your hands?

- *Hands are the most exposed part of your body.
- *On each square centimeter of your hand, there are about 1,500 bacteria or germs.
- * When unclean hands touch your eyes, nose, mouth or food, germs are transferred from your hands into your body.
- *Bacteria or germs on your hands can make you and your family sick!

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING . . .

Recently I was awakened by the Holy Spirit at 3:30 am. As I sat outside, before the first light of day, I began to contemplate the unique relationship

between people with developmental disabilities and their Direct Support Professionals. I began to give thanks for the role of the DSP and the recognition recently given to them by the Senate Resolution. I was then inspired to write the following poem. I dedicate this poem to you,

The DSP

Who? Who? Who shall hear my call?
To serve my people I see as great .
But the world sees as small.
Who will lead them from the shadows
.into the light of day .
Who will help them pave their own
way.
Who will serve my people
that for so long have been hidden and
misunderstood.
Who will help them experience
freedom
and acceptance in their own
neighborhood.
The calling often times seems difficult
And the pay seems small
But the reward will be great at the end
of it all.

If you will listen to the voice of the Christ within - I am sure you will hear that voice say to all of you "Well done my good and faithful servant".

The author of this article, Buck Hensley is a concerned community member who has expressed interest in the future of the DSP workforce. Service Recipients, family members of DSP's, and other concerned members of the community are invited to share their thoughts and stories of support for DSP's. Please send to gabbott@dspat.org

Join The Arc today!
www.thearctn.org

