

Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



Lori Crippes - Dungarvin California

nomination submitted by Susan Whistler, Program Director

Lori reminds one of a slow motion version of the cartoon character “Tasmanian Devil.” Each day, throughout the day, Lori brings energized, but calm, enthusiasm into every activity or project in which she is initiating, participating or leading. For example, Lori initiated a “cooking class” that is loved by all its participants. From shopping to food preparation, from table setting to cleanup, the aspiring “chefs” of Lori’s cooking class have created a wide variety of healthy dishes ranging from “fruit blast” smoothies to Chinese chicken salads. Another favorite activity that Lori has initiated is “football camp”, held weekly in the park with a group of aspiring gridiron athletes. You can almost hear the “Rocky” theme song each time one individual served, B.M., races his wheelchair with Lori by his side toward the end zone for a touchdown. Their joint touchdown celebration of spiking the football puts a smile on everyone’s face, even persons just walking by the park.

Lori has established exceptional, mutually respectful and trusting relationships with everyone she supports at Dungarvin; however, one relationship in particular stands out. S.S. is a 46 year old woman with moderate mental retardation and intermittent explosive disorder. Since having neurological surgery for meningioma (brain tumor) in June 2006, S.S. has developed behaviors ranging from paranoia and aggression to self-injury. Lori and S.S. formed a very special working relationship from the first day that they began working together. When S.S.’s experiences explosive outbursts, Lori knows just what S.S. needs to hear so that she starts to feel safe and calm again. It is because of Lori’s quiet, patient, confident nature that S.S. has found solace with Lori, even on her most challenging days. Working with Lori, S.S. has learned new adaptive ways to identify and express her feelings; e.g., channeling her anger into art projects before she becomes explosive.

Lori is an effective advocate for every person with whom she works at Dungarvin. One individual, T.F., was believed to be non-verbal and had a history of serious aggressive behaviors. Lori began teaching and practicing American Sign Language with T.F. To the great surprise of Dungarvin day services staff and T.F.’s residential team, he communicated his very first words EVER. Finding his voice has opened

many doors for T.F. He was once thought to be too aggressive toward others to participate in many group activities. After speaking his first words and learning more ASL signs with Lori, T.F. now has new ways to indicate his choices, rather than communicating with maladaptive behaviors. Additionally, T.F. has now successfully been integrated in group activities at a tabletop, with little to no aggressions. From his first spoken word to present, T.F.'s life continues to transform as he makes new friends and explores new activities at Dungarvin.

Lori sacrifices her own personal time with her family and her beloved garden at home, all because she recognizes the positive impacts she has on the lives of the persons she supports. Lori's son suffered a severe head injury during a car accident in 2000. Up until 2010, Lori's son required assistance with all activities of daily living, including personal hygiene and meals. In addition, Lori's husband of 32 years was diagnosed with frontal temporal dementia in 2006. To this day, Lori assists her husband with personal hygiene, meals and personal finances as his dementia worsens. It is because of Lori's unselfish commitment and endless energy to serving those who need assistance, regardless whether it is her own family, or if it is her Dungarvin "family," that Lori has earned the respect and admiration of everyone who knows her.

Lori never uses a "cookie cutter" approach to the supports and services she provides to individuals. Lori recognizes the unique strengths and interests of persons served at Dungarvin. For example, Lori discovered that several of the persons with whom she works like makeup. Lori initiated a cosmetics class, applying light makeup to their faces while teaching them methods to apply it themselves. In fact, one of the women, A.P., now purchases her own makeup on the weekends and brings it in for the cosmetics class. Another person, I.S. uses part of her weekly allowance to make makeup purchases at shopping during community outings.

Because of Lori's extraordinary insight into the behaviors, interests, personalities and challenges of persons supported by Dungarvin, she is perceived as a leader by other staff. Lori is an excellent multi-tasker and problem solver upon whom staff know they can depend. Lori has readily accepted the role of "mentor" to several new staff, assisting her supervisor in training them on all aspects of Individual Program Plans of persons whom they support.