

Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



Rachel Rhodes – Dungarvin Colorado

nomination submitted by Erika Thomas, Program Director

Six years can go by quickly when you are Host Home Provider, especially when you have two incredibly fortunate people who happen to be wheelchair bound and depend on you to not only provide unyielding care for them, but to advocate, and afford a fulfilling and adventurous life for them. In the last six years, Rachel Rhodes has given her all to provide this life for the two persons she supports. Rachel has creatively managed to take these individuals on extensive vacations their family members never imagined they would be able to enjoy: Disney World, Disneyland, Alaska, and Canada, to name a few. She provides the encouragement and supports needed to amplify the social development of these individuals.

Rachel has an extremely close relationship with both of these individuals, as well as with their family members and friends. Rachel recently brought one of the individuals to Canada to visit with her family as Rachel is considered a very important part of both families and was invited to enjoy a visit. One of the individuals even calls her "Mom"; the love these persons have for Rachel is incredibly evident every visit one makes to their home. Rachel is their advocate, care provider, their friend, and their family all rolled in one. Rachel and these two persons have given each other nick names. Rachel has even made the efforts to learn the sign language used by one of the individuals, and they communicate back and forth with ease.

Rachel provides a home filled with love and care; she is devoted to enriching the lives of these two persons. Recently one of individuals had her wheelchair serviced. It was noticed that the chair required new parts and that the individual would need a loaner chair. Unfortunately, the loaner chair was not the right fit for her and Rachel advocated for her daily, as the parts took longer to arrive than anticipated, causing her to miss out on Day Program. For this person, Day Program is a place for socialization, to work, to increase independence, and most of all enjoyment. Because of Rachel's advocacy, the parts were received and this person was able to return to her livelihood.

Rachel makes sacrifices that many of us could never imagine, in order to provide the best care possible; sometimes neglecting her own needs as her individuals always come first. She recently lost her father and during this hardship she managed to grieve his loss without even missing a day of taking care of the persons she supports. This is to be applauded, but her humble ways would never allow for us to do so.

Serving two individuals in wheelchairs can create a challenge for transportation. Rachel creatively managed to obtain a van that allowed both of her individuals to ride together, making appointments and adventures more comfortable and realistic for them.

Rachel diligently takes on new challenges and is a leader to many of our other Host Home Providers, as she has helped train several and offers a wealth of knowledge from her many years of experience to our new providers. She helps other providers when in need for respite, as she has the support of her husband who is also a provider in her home, thus allowing Rachel to take on more responsibility with ease.