

# Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



**Monica Thompson – Dungarvin Colorado**

*nomination submitted by Beth Engen, Program Director*

Monica Thompson has been a host home provider to M.S. for 10 years. M.S. is a medically fragile individual with a rare disease known as Ehrlös-Danlos Syndrome, among other medical conditions. Monica exhibits a tremendous amount of love and compassion for M.S. that is evidenced by her joy and quality of life. Before living with Monica, M.S. had such significant behaviors, this hindered her ability to be in the community. Monica has put in a tremendous amount of time with behavior specialists and working on her own with M.S. to decrease the frequency of outbursts and social inappropriateness. M.S. now attends church services on a regular basis, participates in bingo and birthday parties in the community, as well as attends the state fair every year in Pueblo. M.S. took her first plane ride with Monica last year to attend a family reunion in Louisiana, without any behavioral issues.

When M.S. took a fall last year, it was Monica who noticed that “something wasn’t right”, despite being cleared medically. She insisted that M.S. be examined again by the physician and he found that M.S. had indeed fractured her shoulder in the fall. Monica trusted her own instinct and advocated for M.S. when others may have just trusted the initial assessments of professionals. She has developed a bond with M.S., who is very limited in her communication skills. Monica is able to provide care and meet M.S.’ needs in a manner that transcends words.

After M.S. experienced two significant injuries in her day program, Monica advocated for M.S. to have the opportunity to try different day programs in an attempt to assist M.S. find a smaller program that would better suit her needs. Monica did not allow road blocks or resistance from team members distract her from advocating for M.S. to at least try new day programs, although she had attended her previous day program for over 20 years.

Monica is more than a host home provider; she believes in being the primary support for M.S. even if she is not being paid to do so. When M.S. had surgery and was hospitalized, Monica was at the hospital by her side nearly around the clock because she knew that M.S. would not be able to communicate her needs to others and would be fearful being away from home.

As indicated previously, M.S. has significant medical and behavioral challenges. M.S. had a history of self-injury and would hit her head and smack her face, resulting in bruises. Monica has worked with the behavior specialists and her team to provide a safe environment for M.S. and encourages M.S. to communicate with others, albeit very limited. Monica acknowledges M.S. when she speaks and is present in the room and asks that all others do the same. This has led to the self-injurious behaviors becoming almost non-existent.

Monica has taken her passion for caring for others and has been a mentor to her daughter, who is now also a Host Home Provider. Monica also assists other members of our community with care giving and mentoring. Monica is always the number one person that we think of when any individual needs respite because of her warm and loving nature, and her experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities.