

# Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



**Lanny Garcia – Dungarvin New Mexico**  
*nomination submitted by Julie Matthews, Director*

For the past several years, Lanny has worked with two gentlemen, assisting them to participate in the life of their community. Lanny has worked to teach one individual a system of budgeting that allows him full control of his funds, while teaching accountability and responsibility through balancing a checkbook and discriminating between needs and wants when purchasing items. He has supported this individual to achieve his goal of living independently with natural supports by teaching problem solving and health and safety skills. It is expected that the individual will move to his hometown by the end of this year. Lanny has also supported another individual to reconnect with his past by accompanying him on a visit to his hometown and scheduling time with his family through visits and phone calls. He has overseen the individual's increasingly challenging medical needs while assuring the individual has optimal access to his community.

Lanny has developed trusting, respectful relationships with the individuals he supports and their interdisciplinary team members. The individuals call Lanny "Buddy" and are comfortable bringing their concerns and questions to him. He is very familiar with their histories, preferences, what has worked/not worked for them regarding programs and services and is responsive to their needs. Lanny is viewed as an advocate for the individuals he supports and team members, as well as his co-workers, who know that they can count on him to follow through on requests. Family members are especially appreciative of Lanny's willingness to persevere until individuals' needs are met. Both individuals whom Lanny supports have faced significant medical issues over the past year and Lanny has ensured both received prompt medical attention and demonstrated respect for the individuals' privacy while discussing the problems with them and/or during interdisciplinary team meetings.

Lanny meets monthly with the individuals he supports to ask them for suggestions for changes in their home, schedules, menus and household duties. He reviews personal rights and asks individuals how they can protect themselves and who can assist them with making decisions if they need help. Results

of these meetings are shared with his supervisor and they collaborate to address any concerns that are identified. Lanny has made significant efforts to increase "alone time" for one of the individuals as he begins to transition from supported living services to living independently with customized supports. This transition has meant the individual retains the right to assume risk and there has been much focus on dignity of risk, which Lanny has come to support. Lanny ensures both gentlemen demonstrate as much independence as possible in the community and takes advantage of all opportunities for them to develop relationships with community members.

For most of the years that Lanny has worked for Dungarvin New Mexico, he has been raising his family. Despite having children who were actively involved in a variety of school sports, Lanny managed to combine his family responsibilities with work by integrating the individuals he has worked with in to community and school events. He has been with the individuals through traumatic situations including their home being burglarized twice and the death of a beloved staff member. During these times, Lanny has responded quickly to ensure that he was available to the individuals to answer questions and help them to remain as calm as possible. He will take whatever amount of time is needed to listen and repeat information. Lanny consistently goes above and beyond his job responsibilities as demonstrated by his willingness to respond to phone calls and/or events occurring at the house, even when he is not scheduled to work.

The individuals with whom Lanny works face significant dietary challenges. One gentleman has lost a significant amount of weight, but needs support to make healthy food choices in order to maintain his weight loss. The other individual is on an extremely restricted diet due to a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis. Lanny has developed personalized menus that meet the specific dietary needs of each of the individuals and involves them in shopping for groceries and meal preparation activities. Meal times are made as enjoyable as possible despite the dietary restrictions. Lanny has also supported individuals to be able to go on vacations of their choosing every year. He works to overcome any barriers (e.g. money, distance, etc.) and both individuals have had wonderful adventures such as returning to a hometown that was out of state and going to Las Vegas to see "The Strip" and gamble.

Due to Lanny's position and longevity with Dungarvin New Mexico, he is responsible for providing mentoring to new hires and staff requiring additional training in specific areas. Communication skills are above average and he represents himself, the individuals, and the organization well during team meetings. Daily and monthly written documentation are submitted in a timely manner. It is a testament to his leadership that all of the homes he has worked in experienced minimal turnover. He promotes teamwork and demonstrates respect for his coworkers and other team members. Some of the Direct Support Professionals that have worked with him have been promoted to Residential Coordinators after having been trained by Lanny. He has been nominated for and received Employee of the Month. Performance evaluations over the years demonstrate that Lanny consistently puts the needs of the individuals he supports first.