

Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



Kenise Smith – Dungarvin Nevada

nomination submitted by Lauren Wallace, Program Director

Kenise began her employment with Dungarvin just over 3 years ago. Unsure of what she was getting herself into working in this field, she quickly excelled and was promoted from Program Counselor to Program Coordinator. To say that Kenise exceeds the expectations of a direct support professional would be an understatement. As a Program Coordinator, Kenise faces many challenges each day, all of which are handled in a patient, compassionate, professional manner. When Kenise walks into the room, her energetic attitude and bright smile light up the individuals who she supports. Kenise not only cares for the individuals, but takes a heartfelt interest in what they need and how she can enhance their independence and quality of life. Kenise also volunteers as a Special Olympics coach.

Kenise not only builds relationships with the people she supports in the house she oversees, but makes it an effort to build relationships with the individuals residing in the other homes as well. Kenise attends all Special Olympics activities as well as those offered by another organization, Movers and Doers, a community recreation group. Kenise will jump in and assist all individuals whether or not she knows them personally. Kenise has high expectations for all individuals she supports and promotes independence and respect for all she encounters.

Kenise continually supports the physical, emotional and personal well-being of the individuals. She maintains a professional relationship within her community while incorporating all possible resources. Kenise strongly advocates for each person she works with, ensuring each of them has a voice. Kenise continues to create opportunities for them to be included within their community, including encouraging participation in Special Olympics and other local organizations.

Dealing with her own health concerns, Kenise is still known to drop everything to assist in emergencies, coming in on her day off or returning after she has already left for the day. She continues to train new employees or be shadowed by less experienced staff. On several occasions,

she has been involved in managing physically aggressive individuals and has been injured. She just rolls with it, maintaining her professional demeanor. Her attitude is that "it is just what we do."

Kenise is outstanding at working with individuals with varying degrees of disabilities. She adapts her supervision to support each person's needs and desires. Kenise is always coming up with creative new ideas for the individuals. She thinks outside of the box.

Kenise's attitude is that everyone, pulling together, can enhance the quality of lives for the individuals we support and Kenise does just that. Her professionalism and work ethic serve as a positive example to others. She continues to train new employees or be shadowed by less experienced staff. Kenise knows that by having high expectations for herself, her staff and for the people that she supports, their independence in life and quality of life will continue to grow.