

Dungarvin

2014 ANCOR Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination



Daniel Layman – Dungarvin Wisconsin

nomination submitted by Keith Jones, Program Services Coordinator

Dan works in a program that serves individuals with challenging behavior support needs. One of the individuals in the program, J.F., has not typically developed rapport with staff-- until he met Dan. J.F. likes and respects Dan. Dan is able to verbally deescalate J.F. when he is struggling in the program and support and encourage him to make good choices for himself. Dan has helped J.F. develop coping skills which include deep breathing and listening to music, which helps him take time to think before he acts. Having these tools at his disposal has helped J.F. to be successful in his home in the community. J.F. has a history of disrupted community placements, so being successful in his current home in the community has given him a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Dan does not hold J.F.'s past against him. J.F. has had several failed placements and has been physically aggressive with staff at previous placements. Dan makes J.F. feel like he has a clean slate; there is no bringing up the past, just focusing on the here-and-now and the future. Dan has taken the time and initiative to really work on building a solid foundation of respect, which has led J.F. to take a chance and trust Dan. J.F. knows and believes that Dan only has his best interest at heart. J.F. often seeks out Dan for advice when he is struggling and Dan has always proven to be there to listen to J.F. and provide solid guidance to help him be successful.

Seeing the potential in J.F. and learning what triggers both success and challenges for him, Dan advocated for a change to his behavior support plan to be less restrictive. The plan was modified, which in return, helped J.F. to have fewer incidents in the home and gain some stability. The need for any restrictive measures due to aggression has decreased and J.F.'s self-esteem has skyrocketed.

Dan retired from a job with the prison system and took a job providing support to people with developmental disabilities - a job for which he has passion. Dan started in a part-time position but was asked to move to a full-time position because of the positive impact his presence has on J.F. Dan did

move to a full time position and, as a result, has sacrificed his retirement and time with his family. He was willing to take on more hours because of his sense of commitment to J.F. and his success.

J.F. takes medication that has a side effect of tremors. He has a very sincere passion for drawing and has had limited ability to do so because of the tremors. Dan is a very talented artist and has worked with J.F. on his drawings. He gives J.F. tips and tricks to help him be more effective in his drawing and has also physically helped him to trace and color artwork. J.F. is very proud of his artwork and often shares it with guests who come to his home. It would not be uncommon to visit J.F. and leave with a picture. J.F. has a real sense of pride, accomplishment, and enjoyment from these activities with Dan. Dan has helped J.F. foster his creative side and, even though he continues to have tremors, his passion to draw is more vibrant than ever.

Dan has a thorough comprehension of J.F.'s support plan very well and while working he is able to help newer staff understand why the plan is written the way it is. Dan follows the plan to the letter and helps other staff do the same. This consistency is key for J.F. Dan is a leader to other staff. He wants to ensure all staff know how to support J.F. so he can continue to be successful. He is reliable, professional and always willing to learn and improve. His presence in J.F.'s life has been instrumental in helping him to gain the stability he needs for a bright future.