

# Support Those who Support People with Disabilities

Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are a unique marriage of the private sector and the public good. Providers, who range from small, family-operated agencies to multi-state organizations, offer services funded by the government so that individuals with IDD can live full lives in the community instead of institutions. These services are delivered through a dedicated workforce called Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

A DSP is a worker who assists a person with disabilities to lead a fulfilling life in the community through a diverse range of services like helping him or her get ready in the morning, take medication, go to or find work, and participate in social activities.

**MEET A DSP...**



“I have been a host home provider with Mosaic – previously Martin Luther Homes – since 2000. I provide a home and supports for Ty and Mark. Ty has been with me for 17 years and Mark nearly 14. Mark came to me as an emergency placement; he was being abusive to his parents and used to react violently when people tried to engage with him at his day program. Mark couldn’t understand initially why he wasn’t allowed to return home. I informed him that now he has two homes. Once I established, through constant reinforcement, that I was there to help him, he slowly realized I was on his side. We drove past his parents’ house and Mark started saying, “I have two homes; there’s my other house.” When Mark was approved for the comprehensive waiver and became eligible for host homes, he was placed with me full-time. It turns out, Mark is not the type of person who likes to be in large places, which was a real contrast from Ty and me. Mark would stare people down or bump into them to try to start a fight. But now, where he used to look for conflict, he avoids it. When Mark came to me, he was a level five out of a maximum six because of his behavioral issues. Now, he is a level two. Our connection is putting me out of a job! The truth is, this isn’t a job anymore – these guys are part of my family. I couldn’t see myself without Mark and Ty – they are my family – and I would never give them up. It’s about making their lives better.”

**- William Garrett, Direct Support Professional**

Please contact Emma Hudson, Alliance’s Director of Government & Community Relations, for more information or with questions:  
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