



IACP Direct Support Professional Awardees 2023 Announced

Urbandale, Iowa – September 11, 2023: Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are one of the most critical aspects of Long-Term Services & Supports for more than 160,000 Iowans. DSPs are frontline staff who help people with intellectual / developmental disabilities live, learn and work in their community of choice. DSPs are the lifeblood of the community provider industry, and we are honored to display and commemorate their efforts.

To recognize the essential role of DSPs, IACP developed the Direct Support Professional Award. Each year, awardees have been celebrated during National DSP Recognition Week, typically the second week of September. This year, IACP is sought nominations of DSPs who exemplify excellence in the following areas:

- *Serve as a quality-of-life change agent:* focused on physical and mental health and wellbeing
- *Community inclusion and involvement:* promotes inclusive participation and membership in the community
- *Career dedication to serving vulnerable Iowans:* employed as a DSP for more than 2 years.

The IACP Direct Support Professional Award 2023 recipients are Christopher Strums, REM Iowa; Amy Holland, Woodward Community-Based Services; Shelley Sadler, Mosaic of South-Central Iowa; Judy Weldon, ABBE Center for Community Mental Health; Chelsea Baker, WESCO Industries; Samuel Gillespie, One Vision; Beatrice Njoroge, Advantages in Life, Inc; Alex Vonehwegen, Hope Haven, Inc.; and John Frakes, Mainstream Living, Inc.

About IACP

IACP has been relentlessly advocating on behalf of mental health and disability service providers for more than 35 years. We partner with around 130 community-based organizations to provide a wide range of resources to ensure that provider needs are being met. Our services impact organizations located in all 99 counties that annually contribute \$1.3 billion to Iowa's economy.