

## Celebration Ideas

Are you making plans to make this the best Direct Support Professional Week ever? We hope so. And if you're looking for ideas about just how to celebrate DSP Recognition Week, here are a few suggestions to get you started.

Whether you're a provider, a family member, a person receiving services, or an ally in the community, there's something you can do to acknowledge the dedicated DSPs in your life and show your appreciation.

### Staff Appreciation

- Staff appreciation lunch
- Barbeque
- Give your DSPs a gift: gift card, hat, t-shirt
- Ice cream social
- Thank you cakes
- Car wash for the DSPs put on by administrators
- Shadow a DSP for the day
- Design a logo for DSP week t-shirts
- Hold a celebration dinner or banquet

### Family Fun

People served and their families saying a big "Thank You" to your DSPs.

- Family night: play board games and watch movies together
- Family photo album created for the DSP
- Family Thank You cards to DSPs
- Walk, Run, Roll event
- Company-wide picnic
- A small token of appreciation from people served

### Community Involvement

This is a great opportunity to educate your community about the vital supports DSPs provide and involve them in your celebration of the contributions of DSPs and the people they serve in their communities.

- 2013 DSP Congressional Call-in Day - *Wednesday, September 11!* (We'll be sending out more information on this soon. Visit [ANCOR's Action Center](#) to easily locate the contact information for your federal legislators, and plan to include your entire community – staff, persons served, families, funders, etc.) in this important event.
- Work with your state provider association to request from your Governor a proclamation recognizing the week (Check with our state association first – they may have already made the request!)

- Organize a rally or a “Yellow Flag Day” at your state capitol or other prominent locations.
- Food Drive: ask families to bring cans of food to any social event held
- DSP Week flyer/press release to raise awareness
- Invite elected officials to your homes and other facilities to see first hand the amazing work DSPs are doing. If you do this, be sure to invite a reporter. Questions on how to reach out to either an elected official or a reporter? Contact your state provider association for ideas, or contact Barbara Merrill at [bmerril@ancor.org](mailto:bmerril@ancor.org) or Jocelyn Breeland at [jbreeland@ancor.org](mailto:jbreeland@ancor.org) at ANCOR for assistance.
- Can’t get a local politician to come? Invite a reporter in anyway! You have a great story to tell!
- Have an ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign DSP webinar viewing event! Sign up for a webinar, invite a small group, and don’t forget the popcorn!
- Host a “meet your neighbors” get together with the surrounding community

### **Here’s what others have done.**

No need to reinvent the wheel. Here’s a list of ways ANCOR members have celebrated DSP Week in the past. Could something like this work for you?

**Go for a two-fer! Uplift, Inc.** and the **Maine Association of Community Service Providers** took out a full-page ad in the capital area paper recognizing DSPs, and used the opportunity to promote ANCOR’s advocacy alert!

**Invite the Top Brass. The Connecticut Community Providers Association** organized a press conference in which the lieutenant governor spoke, recognizing DSPs for their service.

**Dazzle them with numbers. The InterAgency Council of DD Agencies** organized a rally on the steps of New York City hall that was attended by more than 300 people, *including members of the state assembly.*

**Success breeds success. The MENTOR Network** kicked off a month long celebration of profiling a DSP a day on their Facebook – proving to be so popular it became a regular feature.

**Arkansas** celebrated with a picnic catered in part by Backyard Burgers and presented their DSPs with lanyards for a job well done.

Why celebrate for a day when you can celebrate your DSPs all week long? **John F. Murphy Homes** in Maine planned a fun-filled week of events. A carnival kicked off the week on Monday. A car wash soaked Tuesday. Wednesday brought a pancake breakfast. Thursday rocked with a concert and Friday rounded the week out with a cookout and softball tournament.

Throw a luncheon! **Mosaic** in Delaware and **Mt. Olivet Rolling Acres** in Minnesota hosted luncheons for their DSPs.

**New Avenues to Independence** in Ohio out did themselves one year. They threw an ice cream social and a car wash, **decorated their main campus with yellow flags adorned with their DSP's name**, entered DSPs in a lottery for live trees, spotlighted DSPs who had been with them for over 20 years with a Wall of Fame on their website and sent four DSPs to Columbus to participate in Ohio's state celebration.

Planning to shout from the rooftop how much you appreciate your DSPs? Take a page from this book. **Northern Hills Training Center** in South Dakota took out an announcement in their local paper. The **Mid-Hudson Coalition** took out a billboard!

**The St. Louis Arc** took their DSPs out to a Mexican restaurant one year.

**YAI** of New York spotlights DSPs on their website.

**Deploy the troops from your management office!** Last year ANCOR staff got into the action and visited local DSPs at work, armed with breakfast goodies and copies of the Senate Resolution!

These are just some of the ways you can celebrate your DSPs. The size, number and sticker price of the event isn't nearly as important as the effort you make to say "thank you" to the skilled and dedicated DSPs who making supporting people with disabilities a reality.