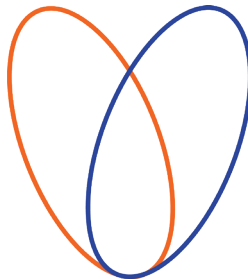


Fall 2020

# DSP WEEK A BIG HIT!



Direct Support Professional  
**RECOGNITION WEEK**

**ANCOR** | RELIAS

Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week is an annual week-long celebration in recognition of the dedication and accomplishments of outstanding direct care staff and their vital contributions to the community. DSPs provide much-needed personal care, training, emotional support and respite to an estimated 100,000 of Michigan's most vulnerable residents. The Michigan Senate noted the essential contributions of these workers in its resolution, saying that "Direct Support Professionals are a critical element in supporting individuals who are receiving health care services for severe chronic health conditions and individuals with functional limitations, and helping them to transition successfully from medical events to post-acute care and long-term support and services."

Each year, DSP Week allows us the opportunity to acknowledge staff who support individuals at ROI. During the week of September 13-19, we posted daily messages from leadership and program staff testimonials to honor and celebrate our DSP staff. The week-long fanfare also included a specially designed t-shirt, goodie bags provided to program sites, Grab-N-Go grilling at our Program Services Building, Pajama Day, Food Truck Rally Day, and Spirit Day (complete with celebration videos performed by staff). Governor Whitmer issued a Certificate of Proclamation to recognize the week of September 13 as Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, and included the following statement:

*"During this week, we recognize and honor Direct Support Professionals for their commitment to providing an important service to people with disabilities in our state, and advocate for their living wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement so they can continue to provide the highest quality of care for the people they support."*

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer



*Mustard and Ketchup made an appearance at the grilled hot dog drive-thru!*



*Doug King's donut delivery was a big hit!*



*Staff received this specially designed t-shirt during DSP Week.*

# 2020

## CEO NOTES

### Stresses on Our Workforce:

Pandemic, Protests and  
the End of Hero Pay



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I wish I could sugar coat this, but I can't. We have great staff who work under a great deal of stress, now more than ever. We continue to manage the health for everyone we serve and our staff. We are serving adults in group homes and in their own homes. We are serving children in our child caring institutions and our outpatient programs. We manage apartments for people getting a variety of support services - or none at all. And we serve as Representative Payee for people who aren't able to manage their own money. Planning to keep everyone safe in this array of services is complex and ever-evolving. And yet, since the beginning of the pandemic, we have had one person served and five staff with a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

We are very proud of our diverse workforce and recognize our diversity is a strength. In a country where there are daily protests over social injustice, there are additional stresses on everyone. We would like to think it does not affect our work life, but it does. Inequality is not easy to talk about, especially for those of us who are white and have gained more than others as a result of our whiteness. The systemic societal injustices of the past have to be eradicated. It is complex and it is

hard work and even harder when you don't recognize those past injustices.

And then, Michigan and the United States have a financial crisis and the premium pay (also known as Hero Pay) they have been providing could disappear while we continue to manage the pandemic. Staff were underpaid to begin with, but the Hero Pay allowed ROI to maintain a stable workforce during these stressful times. We just received the wonderful news that the Hero Pay has been extended through the end of December and we are, of course, grateful. As we enter the fall and add the complexities of the flu season to this pandemic, the Direct Support Professionals and everyone they support deserve this financial support, and they deserve it becoming permanent. Please continue to reach out to your State and national legislators. Thank them for the temporary funding and advocate that the premium pay become permanent. We believe this financial support to be crucial for everyone we serve.

Scott Schrum  
Chief Executive Officer

### ROI Garden of Remembrance



Due to COVID-19, we were unable to host the annual Garden of Remembrance event publicly this year. As an alternative, we invited families of individuals we've lost who were members of the ROI family to join us for private ceremonies and placement of bricks during the week of August 17. The families and staff who attended appreciated having the time to honor their loved one and share special memories together in the garden.





# STAFF HIGHLIGHT

## ROI Welcomes Kristi Watson as CFO

We are happy to welcome Kristi Watson to our leadership team as Chief Financial Officer. Kristi has over a decade of experience in public accounting. Prior to coming to ROI, she served as Chief Financial Officer at the Gilmore Car Museum, Controller at AG Business Systems and Manager at Yeo & Yeo, PC. She has a Masters in Accountancy from Western Michigan University.



Kristi Watson, CFO

**Q How has your previous experience prepared you for this role?**

**A** My expertise in public accounting and the private sector has allowed me to grow a diverse set of skills: auditing, taxes, payroll, leadership, team building, financial statements and internal controls. Accounting is my super power! Being able to use these skills in an organization dedicated to caring for and improving the lives of others is a true blessing. I'm also a lifelong advocate for my daughter Maddy, a sassy, smart as a whip, beauty queen who is on the autism spectrum. I am her champion, her voice when she needs back up, and the one who makes her clean her room despite her protests. Continuing that advocacy and support now for the individuals we serve is the best part of my role at ROI!

**Q What's your leadership style?**

**A** I strive to empower people and to give them the resources, training and support needed to help them thrive in their roles.

■ ■ ■

**Q What's been your biggest professional success?**

**A** My education and credentials. I have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a CPA designation. They represent hours, days, months and years of hard work, frustration, immense stress, and sacrifice. And I am grateful to have had the opportunity to earn them. They are mine. Earned and forever.

■ ■ ■

**Q What book would we find on your nightstand?**

**A** WW Meal Planning. I figure age 40 is a good time to finally learn how to cook. And hopefully make it healthy! Edible would be a bonus.

■ ■ ■

**Q If you could have lunch with any famous people, whom would you choose?**

**A** David Bowie, Prince, Frank Zappa, Layne Staley, Freddie Mercury, Tom Petty and Judy Garland at a long table at Los Amigos - a musical feast!

*"Our Direct Support Professionals are truly the heart and soul of the life-changing contributions made by ROI. Their commitment to enhancing the quality-of-life and care for the people they serve is extraordinary and we are forever grateful."*

- Kristi Watson

## 2020 ROI Hole Stroll results

Despite the event being initially postponed (and then canceled altogether), we are happy to report that



**\$39,390.15** (net revenue) was raised on behalf of the 2020 ROI Hole Stroll.

Many thanks go out to the event sponsors and supporters who generously partnered with us, as well as the event

planning committee for their leadership during this uniquely challenging time. Instead of hosting a silent and live auction this year, we created an online auction using the BiddingOwl platform.



We look forward to hosting the 27th annual ROI Hole Stroll "live and in-person" on Friday, June 11, 2021.

## ROI Commits to Becoming Anti-Racist Organization



At the Board meeting on August 14th, the ROI Board of Directors adopted a motion intentionally declaring ROI to become an anti-racist organization. As a result, ROI is making a renewed and enhanced commitment to justice, equity and inclusion in all that we do. This is an intentional process that will take a great deal of time, energy and focus.

We will be creating a leadership team consisting of staff and Board members to clarify our path forward to accomplish these important foundational goals to make ROI a better organization, a better employer and a better partner in our community.

## Responding to COVID-19

The novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, has created an evolving situation with varied impacts and is affecting the individuals we serve, our staff, our families, and our way of life. We have had to cancel our annual staff awards event, golf outing and holiday parties. However, the community support we have received because of the pandemic has been extraordinary, including generous donations of face masks and other PPE, disinfectants and thermometers. We continue to follow the orders of the Governor, as well as guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Kalamazoo County Public Health Department. We are taking the utmost care as we continue to assist upwards of 175 people every day, in home settings where social distancing is not possible.

All ROI staff are screened for the symptoms of COVID-19 prior to reporting in to work at program locations. All individuals we serve and staff get temperature checks twice daily. Hand sanitizer is provided throughout program locations. Regular weekly communications with relevant updates are being emailed to all staff. We are restricting all visitors and non-essential personnel in the residential programs to comply with the Governor's executive order. We continue to make contingency plans for staff shortages across our agency and we have enough PPE to protect staff and deploy the equipment as needed.

With funding assistance from our Endowment at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Integrated Services of Kalamazoo (ISK) and the State of Michigan, we have been able to provide all program staff with "Hero Pay" for all hours worked. We are also providing additional Hero Pay for all staff, funded by the Small Business Association - Payroll Protection Program for workforce retention. We have also received a generous grant from the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region's Disaster Relief Fund to assist with workforce stabilization. And finally, we received two generous donations, allowing us to purchase gift cards for all ROI staff as a way of saying thank you, from the families we support to ROI's dedicated employees. We remain committed to our Mission and are determined to weather the storm as we continue to be there for the individuals we serve over the coming weeks and months.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

*"I am one of the nurses at Schuring and Meadowcroft and I thank ROI for their careful and professional response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been very impressed with the daily communications to the various programs. It makes me feel that we are supported. I have been in the medical field for 30 years and I have not experienced this level of compassionate and flexible care in any other employment setting."*

*- Rebecca Barlow, RN*



## Wish List

### ART SUPPLIES

- Paint and paintbrushes
- Paint smocks
- Colored paper
- Crayons
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Chalk
- Child size scissors
- Glue
- Glue sticks
- Foam stickers
- Popsicle sticks
- Stringing beads and thick string
- Pipe cleaners
- Tissue paper (variety of colors)
- Cotton balls

### OUTDOOR PLAY TOYS

- Soccer nets
- Soccer balls
- Basketballs
- Kick balls
- Softballs
- Scooters
- Sand toys
- Baseball glove for right-handers
- Cones
- Hula hoops
- Exercise balls
- Climbing Toys/ Structure

### GAMES

- Puzzles
- Noisy/musical toys
- Pop-up toys
- Board games
- Play-Doh
- Costumes to play dress up
- Bluetooth Speakers and Headphones

### CLASSROOM

- Toy Cars
- Baby Dolls
- Barbie Dolls
- Puzzles
- Tackle Boxes: 4 pack Kast King Fishing Tackle Boxes with removable dividers

## Harding's Markets supports Autism Awareness Month



We are happy to announce that Harding's Friendly Markets raised **\$4,829.95** for the Great Lakes Center for Autism Treatment and Research (GLC) through their in-store campaign on behalf of Autism Awareness Month. That's a total of \$45,569.45 raised since our partnership with Harding's began in 2012!

We are truly grateful for this ongoing mission partnership with Harding's and the impact it has on our autism program.

## Youth Hockey Supports Autism



We are happy to announce that **\$18,127.24** was raised during the 8th annual Youth Hockey Fights for Kids with Autism event held in January. Approximately 250 hockey players from kindergarten through high school played throughout the day to raise funds and increase autism awareness in our community.

Event sponsors included DTE Energy, Consumers Energy, Wings West, Kalamazoo Optimist Hockey Association, South Central High School Hockey League, and Kingscott.

Since 2013, over \$83,000 has been raised to benefit children served at the Great Lakes Center for Autism Treatment and Research (GLC). Proceeds from the event will help fund program materials and scholarships for families served in our autism program.



Dianne Shaffer (KOHA President), Scott Schrum (Chief Executive Officer), Stephanie Dukeshere (KOHA Director of Marketing and Communications), Jeana Koerber (Executive Director of Autism Services), Frank Noonan (SCHSHL League Commissioner), Darci Stevens (Business Development Manager) and Matt Schaffer (Hockey Services Sales Manager) celebrate the success of the event!





### **Mission**

ROI partners with children and adults with disabilities and their families so they may live more meaningful, healthy, and independent lives in their homes and communities.

### **Vision**

ROI will be recognized as the regional provider of choice for people with disabilities and a model of excellence for improving quality-of-life outcomes.

p: 269.343.3731 | f: 269.343.2940

[www.residentialopportunities.org](http://www.residentialopportunities.org)  
[www.autismtreatmentresearch.org](http://www.autismtreatmentresearch.org)

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**community. home . independence**



**Hunter wants everyone to know  
he's enjoying the outdoors while  
practicing social distancing!**



## **MAKE AN IMPACT** with Planned Giving

Although 2020 will be marked as a time of widespread change, the overarching trends in philanthropy are positive: individuals, companies, and groups continue to invest in the causes they care about. Through planned giving, you can create a lasting impact on your community and make a difference for future generations to come. Contact Dana DeLuca at 269.250.8234 for more information.

Donate online at [www.residentialopportunities.org/how-help](http://www.residentialopportunities.org/how-help)