

**THEIR VIEW**

# Direct support professionals provide invaluable services

Provider. Direct support professional. Caregiver. Direct care worker.

It's pretty likely that if you don't work in the field of developmental disabilities, these words don't mean much to you. But if you are a person receiving services, these words mean a lot. We don't have a great title for the people that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities, likely because it's really difficult to come up

with a title for someone who is truly a "jack of all trades." For the sake of this column, we will refer to them as direct support professionals.

Direct support professionals or DSPs are the people who are paid to provide services to individuals who receive support from the Shelby County Board of Developmental Disabilities. These people are not employees of the Shelby County Board of DD, but are either employed by one of our

provider partner agencies or are independent contractors with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. The Shelby County Board of DD provides funding for these services and will often partner with Medicaid to pay them.

Services can happen anywhere and everywhere. The person receiving support may need assistance with



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doing grocery shopping, banking or doctor's appointments. He or she may need someone to help them clean their house or cook food. He or she may need assistance with bathing, taking medication or

changing their clothing. DSPs get to know the person they are working with and become a part of their life.

Many people don't know about this

rewarding field of work. I know I wasn't aware that the job existed until I applied for a DSP job while in college. I was interested in gaining some experience in human services and was looking for a job that had flexible shifts, so I could continue to take classes and work at my other job. Little did I know that I would develop a career that I would love from working that part-time job all those years ago.

I hear that story from so many people.

People who fell into the field unexpectedly and discovered that they love it. Many people make a career out of it. Some people use the job to gain experience in order to move on to other jobs along their career path. Others may only work as a DSP for a little while or it may be their side-gig.

The Board of DD recently assisted a young man to become an independent provider. He had tried college

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