

# Outstanding DSP Award Nomination

## **Award Description:**

The DSP Award will be presented to a DSP who has positively affected the lives of individuals served by an InterHab member agency. The DSP is someone who has gone above and beyond in their daily work to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**NOMINEE:** Jesse Blagg

**ORGANIZATION:** Mosaic in Southeast Kansas

Include a narrative including answers to the following questions. You may also attach a maximum of three letters of support. Additional information may be attached if necessary.

- What is the staff person's job?
- To what needs has the staff person responded and how were they met?
- What are the person's significant accomplishments in his or her workplace?
- List any personal services and/or achievements that are pertinent.
- Provide a biographical sketch of the person.
- Additional information.

## **NOMINATION NARRATIVE:**

Mosaic in Southeast Kansas is nominating Jesse Blagg for the Outstanding DSP Award Nomination. Jesse is a contracted Direct Support Professional that provides shared living services to two gentlemen in his home.

Jesse serves two individuals with high needs in Shared Living. He not only makes sure all of their basic needs are met, he has gone above and beyond to not only support them, but ensure they have a life where they get to do things they want to do, where they are comfortable in their home, where they are part of the community, have friends and family and get to do fun activities that they enjoy. He has truly made a difference in the lives of the two men he supports.

Jesse works closely with guardians and Mosaic to ensure that the supports he is providing are effective, meaningful, and current for the needs of those he supports. Jesse supports two gentlemen with autism, Liam and Brandon. Brandon struggles with changes in his routine and this has at times required law enforcement and the use of psychotropic medications to calm him down after an unexpected interruption in his life. Most recently, Jesse purchased a new home and immediately reached out to Brandon's support team to ensure this transition went as smoothly as possible. Jesse took pictures

of Brandon's entire bedroom and taped his DVD's to the shelf so that nothing would be out of place. Jesse took it upon himself to reach out to Brandon's mom Kelley so she could look at the home Brandon would move into and also see if she wanted to be involved. Jesse thought Kelley may want to take Brandon to do something fun while he carefully moved Brandon's belongings to the new bedroom, exactly the way they were in his old room. When Brandon arrived at his new home, he did have some anxiety, but Jesse had put so much thought into making the transition smooth that he had Brandon's swing there to calm him down, he made up a warm bath for Brandon, and kept a serene home environment to ensure Brandon didn't get overstimulated. These extra steps were crucial for Brandon's transition and he now loves his new home.

Jesse stays involved with all aspects of Brandon and Liam's life, even when they're not in the home. Brandon enjoys attending day services, and sometimes there are outings planned that may switch up Brandon's routine. Jesse communicates with day services staff to prepare for any upcoming events that Brandon may want to attend, but might create anxiety for him. Jesse remains an on-call support to staff during daily activities, since he is often able to calm Brandon down when his anxiety gets too high, prior to any self-injurious behaviors or property destruction. When big events, such as a trip to see the Kansas City Royals happen, Brandon is now able to attend with his friends. Jesse provides a calm, consistent environment for Brandon to come home to so he is able to enjoy time with his friends, where previously he would just stay behind because those stimulating activities would escalate his behavioral issues.

Jesse is actively involved in the care of Brandon and Liam in all aspects of their lives. Jesse not only attends all necessary planning meetings, but he provides thoughtful feedback that assists others who support Brandon and Liam. Jesse is a great communicator and he values the feedback he receives from guardians and other support team members. He doesn't assume to know everything and he will try suggestions from the team, even if it's something that has already been tried in the past. He is humble in the way he provides care, but a fierce advocate who will go above and beyond to ensure the gentlemen he supports have the same opportunities and the best accommodations for their needs.

Jesse wants to incorporate Liam and Brandon into his family, but both gentlemen enjoy spending time in their rooms playing video games or watching television. In order to have more meaningful time with the guys, he has been adding various sensory items throughout the home, so they want to come out for more than just meals. He purchased a home with a glassed-in porch that sits right off the kitchen and put the swing in there and there's space for everyone to sit and visit. He added an electric fireplace to the living room, which Liam happily comes out of his room to enjoy. There are scents that Liam really enjoys, so Jesse will spray his preferred cologne, or other spray that creates an

environment that Liam wants to take part in. Jesse really goes above and beyond to ensure the home is shared and enjoyed by everyone.

Brandon and Liam both have high needs and can be a lot to handle. Jesse has exhibited a lot of patience and it is apparent in everything he does that he wants what is best for Liam and Brandon. His creative thinking and interventions have significantly reduced the amount of law enforcement involvement and his communication with the day service DSPs has helped them deal with Brandon more effectively. To Jesse this isn't about a paycheck, it's about feeling like he is doing what he is made to do.

**NAME OF PERSON MAKING THIS NOMINATION:** Jennifer Cardin

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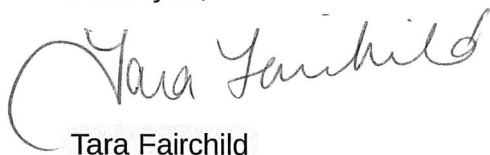
My name is Tara Fairchild and I would like to share my support for nominating Jesse Blagg for Interhab's DSP of the Year award. I work at Mosaic in Southeast Kansas as the Independent Contract Program Manager (ICPM) and my role is to oversee the shared living homes in Southeast Kansas. Jesse Blagg has been exceptional in his role as a Direct Support Professional. The qualities that set Jesse apart from other DSPs are that he is patient, innovative, and consistent.

Jesse is patient with the two gentlemen he supports in his home. He recognizes if someone is having a rough day and just needs a bit more time to get ready, eat dinner, or complete a typical daily task. He is patient with the people he supports, but also with whatever life throws his way as well. If day service staff are struggling, he's happy to come meet with them to show effective strategies for working with the two gentlemen he supports. If there's a big trip coming up, he will help strategize with the team and work with both men to ensure they're prepared for the event. Previously, they wouldn't be able to attend these events because it would be overwhelming, but because Jesse prepares them for the trip, they are able to not only attend, but have a really great time.

Jesse is innovative with the support that he provides. The two men in his home have been roommates for years and are close like brothers. As we all know, brothers don't always get along. Both gentlemen will go into each other's bedrooms and take things. Rather than telling them to knock it off (which has a zero percent success rate of working), he makes a joke of it and grabs an item too and jokes that "we're taking things", but puts everything right back. This innovative thinking has made a huge impact on their lives. One of the men would get upset and violent and would need police involvement to intervene when his roommate would walk into his room. There have been no issues related to stealing in a very long time, but there is a lot of good natured fun that has come from a previously hostile situation.

Jesse is consistent with the care he provides. Both gentlemen he supports have autism and rely heavily on consistency to have a positive outcome with their days. Jesse follows a daily routine that suits each person's needs. If he gets called to support day service staff or to pick up one of the gentlemen for any reason, he can be relied upon to show up. Jesse supports these gentlemen in a way that anyone would want their loved one supported. He deserves this award for all the above reasons and so much more. Please consider Jesse for the DSP of the Year Interhab Award.

Thank you,



Tara Fairchild