

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

NOMINATION NARRATIVE:

Jesse Blagg is very deserving of the Interhab President's award for many reasons. 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 the service provider to ensure the supports he is providing are effective and meaningful for the needs of those he supports. One individual he supports struggles with changes in his routine, which has required law enforcement and the use of psychotropic medications to calm him down after unexpected interruptions. Jesse recently purchased a new home and immediately reached out to the individuals support team to ensure this transition went as smoothly as possible. Jesse took pictures of the individuals entire bedroom and taped his DVD's to the shelf so that nothing would be out of place. Jesse reached out to the individual's mom, Kelley so she could look at the home he would move into prior to the move. Jesse carefully moved all of this individual's belongings to the new bedroom, exactly the way they were in his old room. When the gentleman arrived at his new home, he did have some anxiety, but Jesse had his swing there to calm him down, made a warm bath for him, and kept a serene environment to ensure he didn't get overstimulated. These extra steps were crucial for the gentleman's transition and he now loves his new home.

Jesse stays involved in all aspects of the lives of the individuals he supports, even when they're not in the home. One individual enjoys attending day services, and sometimes there are outings planned that may switch up his routine. Jesse communicates with day services staff to prepare for any upcoming events that the individual 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 this gentleman down when his anxiety gets too high, prior to any self-injurious behaviors or property destruction. With Jesse's support, this individual has been able to attend big events, such as a trip to see the Kansas City Royals play, or a trip to Silver Dollar City with his friends. Jesse provides a calm, consistent environment for him to come home to so he is able to enjoy time with his friends and family, where previously he would just stay behind because those stimulating activities would escalate his behavioral issues. Jesse also communicates very

regularly with the families of the two gentlemen he supports. He sends pictures on a regular basis, communicates with their parents to get their input and makes sure both gentlemen see their families regularly.

Jesse embodies the quality of leadership. He is very proactive. If he has a concern he discusses it with the care coordination team immediately. Jesse offers suggestions and communicates with the day service staff on things he has done that have been effective in dealing with behaviors from the two gentlemen he supports. The DSPs often call Jesse to ask him questions or get his input. If there is a behavior, Jesse is the first to step in and help the other DSPs. Jesse not only attends all necessary planning meetings, but he provides thoughtful feedback that assists others who support the two gentlemen. 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 really wants the two guys he supports to be a part of 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 of their room for more than just meals. Jesse purchased a home with a glassed-in porch that sits right off the kitchen and put a swing in there so there is space for everyone to sit and visit. He added an electric fireplace to the living room, which they both happily come out of their rooms to enjoy. There are scents that one of the gentlemen really enjoys, so Jesse will spray his preferred cologne, or other spray that creates an environment that he wants to take part in. Jesse really goes above and beyond to ensure the home is shared and enjoyed by everyone. It would be easy to just let the two guys stay in their rooms but it is so important to Jesse that they are engaged and living a fulfilling life that he does special things to make them want to engage daily.

Both of the guys Jesse supports have very 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 them. 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 any potential behaviors 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

ORGANIZATION: Mosaic in Southeast Kansas

TELEPHONE: 620-249-5189

E-MAIL: jennifer.cardin@mosaicinfo.org

I have reviewed and agreed to the criteria for filming the awards video.

I have obtained approval for this nomination from the submitting agency's Executive Director.

Send this form via email to mshreve@interhab.org

The deadline to submit award nominations is June 7!

My name is Tara Fairchild and I would like to share my support for nominating Jesse Blagg for Interhab's Outstanding 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 Outstanding DSP of the Year Award..

Thank you,

Tara Fairchild