



Brenda Wilkinson Inspires at Annual DSP Celebration

In late September, Brenda Wilkinson spoke at the Annual Direct Support Professional (DSP) Celebration in Providence, hosted by the Community Provider Network of Rhode Island (CPNRI). The event, attended by more than 400 people, honored DSPs who support individuals with disabilities every day.

Brenda introduced a video of her poem, "Human, Too," written over 30 years ago and recently chosen as our theme for Disability Pride Month. Produced by CPNRI and featuring individuals supported by The Arc of Blackstone Valley, the video premiered at the celebration.

Brenda shared that her poem was inspired by years of feeling overlooked. "I got tired of being ignored and disrespected," she said. "It just poured out of me."

An artist at our Flying Shuttles Art & Weaving Studio in Pawtucket, Brenda began creating at a young age and later discovered her gift for poetry. Today, she uses her art to advocate for inclusion and self-expression. Brenda's work—whether woven, painted, or written—reflects her belief that every person deserves to be seen, heard, and valued. "There are a lot of people with disabilities who can't talk for themselves. Someone like us has to speak for them."

A Message from our CEO

Dear Friends,
So much has happened over these vibrant summer months! We've had countless opportunities to celebrate with both the individuals we support and our incredible team. Many of the people we serve enjoyed memorable adventures and day trips throughout Rhode Island and neighboring states—taking full advantage of the beautiful weather and all the season had to offer.

In September, we proudly celebrated Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week. Our Leadership Team, alongside program managers and staff from the Finance and HR departments, rolled up their sleeves to wash staff vehicles—a small gesture of appreciation for their big impact. The celebration also featured food trucks from Frisky Fries and Palagi Ice Cream, a raffle for Harry & David gift baskets, and an afternoon filled with music, great food, and well-earned recognition. A special thank you to Dustin Green for organizing such a thoughtful and fun event.

Once again this year Betty Goyer led the planning efforts for our annual agency Summer Picnic at 12 Acres. Although the event was postponed by a day due to weather, it turned out to be a fantastic gathering. Live music by Mark Cary brought an extra spark to the day—after all, no Arc of Blackstone Valley celebration is complete without some dancing!

We were also honored to take part in the 40th Annual DSP Recognition Event hosted by the Community Provider Network of Rhode Island. Our very own Brenda Wilkinson received a standing ovation after presenting her powerful poem, "Human Too," via a video produced by CPNRI that featured Brenda and several other individuals we support. Brenda's poem is a moving reminder that the people we serve are active members of their communities and share some of the same dreams, needs, and aspirations as all of us.

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce the early stages of a new housing initiative in the City of Pawtucket.

We've already overcome initial hurdles related to funding and design, and we look forward to sharing more updates as this important project progresses. Please also join me in congratulating Kasey Oliveira from Team 2, who has been named our DSP of the Year! Kasey has been with our organization for over 20 years and continues to exemplify commitment, compassion, and excellence in everything she does. Thank you, Kasey, for your outstanding service and dedication to our mission.

As we head into fall, keep an eye out for our 12 Weeks of Giving flyers and mailers—they'll be arriving soon! Wishing you all a healthy, joyful season ahead.

John J. Padien III
Chief Executive Officer



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Soapy Success: Making Waves at the Car Wash

During DSP Appreciation Week in September, our management team came together to host a fun and refreshing car wash event to honor our incredible Direct Support Professionals. It was a bubbly way to say thank you for their dedication, compassion, and the difference they make every day! Everyone enjoyed having the Friskie Fries and ice cream trucks stop by!



Building Connections Over Barbecue: Our Annual Cookout Recap

The Arc of Blackstone Valley's Annual Cookout was a joyful celebration of connection, appreciation, and summer fun! Held at Twelve Acres, the event brought together staff and individuals we support for an afternoon filled with delicious food, lively music, and heartfelt moments. It was a chance to relax, laugh, and reflect on the impact we make together. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success—we're already looking forward to next year's cookout!



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Annual 12 Weeks of Giving

You can make a difference in the lives of the people supported by The Arc of Blackstone Valley.

You can help people of all abilities pursue their goals and dreams.

This holiday season, you can ensure everyone gets a chance to celebrate in an inclusive and meaningful way.

By contributing to our \$35,000 goal, you'll provide;

- festive events
- essential resources
- personalized support services to make people's holidays and years memorable

Your support changes lives.
Will you join us?

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