

AMSTERDAM

# Liberty ARC employee receives national award

Liberty ARC, the Montgomery County Chapter of The Arc New York, recently announced that employee Samantha Anthony was named the 2023 New York State Direct Support Professional (DSP) of the Year by The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR).

ANCOR is a national organization focused on federal policy and shared solutions to strengthen the ability of community-based providers to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Direct Support Professional Recognition Award is given to those who personify the values of ANCOR's National Advocacy Campaign, which works to ensure a well-trained and sustainable direct support workforce. Nominees are judged on the work they've done to build social networks, substantive community participation, and advocating for the people they serve.

"Liberty ARC is extremely proud of Samantha being recognized by ANCOR as their 2023 NYS DSP," said Liberty ARC CEO Jennifer Saunders in the release. "Samantha is an outstanding employee who has truly made a lasting and significant impact in the lives of the people she supports. Creating meaningful relationships with the people she supports is at the core of her work. Every day, she takes a person-centered

approach with the families she is working with, always taking the time to understand the goals and desires of the people she supports. Samantha exemplifies the importance of a direct support professional."

Anthony has worked as a DSP in Liberty ARC's Family Support Services (FSS) program for the three years. Anthony was nominated by a fellow employee and was highlighted as a staff member "deserving of this award due to her dedication, leadership and advocacy, and her constantly going above and beyond for the people she supports."

"I can't believe it," Anthony said in a news release. "As it has set in that I am receiving this recognition, I feel so grateful and honored to receive such a wonderful award. I am flooded with so many emotions as my love for helping others is being recognized. I remember as a young girl is when I first found joy in helping others."

Anthony has supported a woman so she could build the skills necessary to have more independence to make her own medical appointments and to oversee all aspects of her medications. Anthony has also used her connections at a local food bank to find meaningful volunteer work for people she supports, and worked with a man and his elderly mother so they can continue to live in their

family home together.

"I love being a DSP because it is very rewarding to go to work every day and work with the people I support through FSS," Anthony said. "I am always looking for different ways to empower people. In Family Support we get to work with families and build meaningful relationships with not just the people we support, but their loved ones as well. We get to also see the people we support in different settings, including in their home and their community. I love the way the people I support make me laugh and smile through our adventures, and in turn do the same for them."

Direct Support Professionals provide a rich mosaic of daily support services for many Americans with disabilities. DSPs play an important role in the lives of the people they assist. They are there to listen, encourage, and support people to lead full and independent lives. Since 2007, ANCOR has honored exceptional Direct Support Professionals with this award for exemplary work in furthering community inclusion and full participation for the many Americans living with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities.

"For 17 years now, ANCOR has presented the Direct Support Professional of the Year Awards



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Liberty ARC Direct Support Professional Samantha Anthony was named the 2023 New York State Direct Support Professional of the Year by The American Network of Community Options and Resources.

to recognize the outstanding professionals who power community inclusion for people with [intellectual and developmental disabilities]," said Barbara Merrill, CEO for ANCOR, in the release. "The outstanding DSPs being honored this year deliver life-enhancing supports amid no shortage of significant challenges, not the least of which is a long-standing crisis in the ability of providers to recruit and retain qualified DSPs. Through it all, these professionals demonstrate an unwavering commitment to

community inclusion and to the people they support. That's why we feel honored to celebrate Samantha and more than to other DSPs who exemplify excellence in our field."

Families have told FSS employees "how proud they are of their child's accomplishments and how it was Anthony's support that helped them get there." On Wednesday, ANCOR will present Anthony with the Direct Support Professional of the Year Award at its annual conference in Chicago.