Pictured are NASDP graduates alongside Liberty ARC upper administration and special guests.

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AMSTERDAM

Liberty ARC staff earn national credentials

Liberty ARC celebrated their fourth class of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who achieved National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) credentials in August and as part of the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) credentialing program.

A total of 22 DSPs at Liberty ARC were recognized for their accomplishment in earning at least one credential over the past 12 months.

On hand to help celebrate were Kathy Brown from NADSP, City of Amsterdam Mayor Michael Cinquanti, Montgomery County Attorney Meghan Manion, and New York State Assemblywoman Mary Beth Walsh.

NADSP is one of the nation's leading DSP associations, promoting excellence in direct support work.

As a member of NADSP, Liberty ARC has the opportunity for our direct support staff to earn credentials through the NADSP E-Badges Academy.

This is a nationally-recognized credential with different levels (DSP-I, DSP-II, DSP-III, FLS). Each E-Badge challenges the DSP taking the module to expand their knowledge and apply it in situations with the people they support.

The coursework includes a rigorous 100 hours of online classwork as well as demonstrating application of the principles learned.

"We know that having the right training and tools makes a huge difference in the quality of supports we can offer, and we are proud to be at the forefront of our field in raising the standards of excellence," said Liberty ARC CEO Jennifer Saunders. "We all know that direct support work is multi-faceted and draws on knowledge from many different disciplines, as well as interpersonal skills such as empathy, compassion, and communication. Today we are so proud of our graduates for demonstrating these skills and for being willing to further their own education to better serve the people they support."

Graduates of Liberty ARC's fourth class are: Jessica Anastasio, Taylor Andrews, Rebekah Califano, Patricia DiScenza, Tyrell Douglas, Hannah Edwards, Sue Ferry, Amy Gifford, Alexander Grey, Raymond Hyam, Kylie Hyjek, Stacey Just, Natasha King, Cassondra Lozano, Marisa Maybury, Lisa Moore, Jamie Morey, Tierra Murphy, Brandon Schuyler, Shannon Schuyler, Carolyn Slater, and Summer VanNostrand.

Liberty ARC announced their membership with NADSP and inclusion in the statewide Office for People With Developmental Disabilities Pilot Program in the winter of 2023.

During the ceremony, Summer VanNostrand, who is a Residential Manager at Liberty ARC and took part in the NADSP program this year, spoke to her fellow graduates and guests during the ceremony.

"As DSPs, the work we do matters," VanNostrand said. "Every day we have the opportunity to support people in making their own choices, reaching their goals, and discovering new experiences and living lives that are meaningful to them. Through the NADSP program, I have learned even more about the importance of person-centered support, advocacy, respect, dignity, and the NADSP Code of Ethics. I have also learned that being a great DSP isn't just about doing things for someone. It's about supporting people in doing as much as possible for themselves, honoring their choices, and making sure that their voices are heard."