

News Release



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Vermont Celebrates Direct Support Professionals Recognition Day September 14, 2017

Montpelier, VT — The week of September 10-16, 2017 is national **Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week** and is being celebrated in Vermont! This week recognizes the dedication and contributions of Vermont's direct support professionals in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

Green Mountain Self-Advocates, Vermont Care Partners, and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Services Division will co-sponsor a state-wide celebration on **Thursday, September 14, 2017 from 11am-1pm on the Vermont State House Lawn in Montpelier** to honor Direct Support Professionals' commitment to promoting community inclusion for individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities. A Story Garden will display hundreds of personal stories and artwork created by people with disabilities. Clare McFadden, the newly appointed Director of Developmental Services Division will recognize the irreplaceable role of Direct Support Professionals in supporting Vermonters with disabilities to lead meaningful and inclusive lives in Vermont communities. This year we are celebrating that the essential services provided by Direct Support Professionals prompted the VT legislature to pass a bill that implemented a much-needed wage increase during the upcoming FY18 and FY19 for Direct Support Professionals employed at designated mental health agencies.

During Thursday's celebration flags will be displayed in the Story Garden sharing how support staff have positively impacted the lives of Vermonters with disabilities. Flags from previous years have said, "Greg is my case manager. He wants to help me out. I've been working with him for 12 years. He likes rock music. He helped me get my own radio show. He supports me. He sets me up with people to work with that I like. He encourages me to walk on my own. He helps me find housing and gave me a job. I am happy he is my case manager." "I appreciate my staff because they take me to see my family." "Cindy helps me have a happy and fun life." "My support worker helps me at work and in the community and find a nice home to live in with wonderful people." "Having my support team has enabled me to become: confident, strong, independent, responsible and a good leader!"

Thursday's event will feature opportunities for people to video-record their stories with their support staff, have refreshments, hear public remarks and view the beautiful Story Garden.

For more information about Green Mountain Self-Advocates, please visit www.gmsavt.org. For more information about Vermont Care Partners please visit <http://vermontcarepartners.org/>. For more information about the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Services Division please visit <http://ddsd.vermont.gov>.

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