

# ADVOCACY

*People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter*



**People First  
of  
Toledo**

## DSP Crisis

*By Quinn Thomas*

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are essential caregivers for individuals with disabilities. They make living life possible. A DSP may help someone with tasks such as getting out of bed for the day, eating their meals, driving to work, personal care, and many other necessary activities of daily living. Having a DSP to provide assistance gives many disabled people freedom and independence they would not otherwise be able to achieve.

But lately, there has been more demand for care than there have been workers available to provide it. This shortage existed before the pandemic, but since then it has exploded. Why?

Direct care workers are not paid enough. This may seem like a matter of opinion, but

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **CANVAS PAINTING**

September 8, 4:00-5:30, at Courageous Acres. Free.

#### **TEEN GAME NIGHT**

September 14, 6:00-8:00, at the Ability Center. For ages 13-17. Registration required.

#### **GLASS CITY GLOWTACULAR**

September 16, 7:00-11:00, at the Glass City Metropark. Inclusive outdoor activities.

#### **COMMON GROUND SOCIAL GROUP**

September 19, 5:30-7:30, at LCBDD. For neurodiverse people ages 18+.

#### **KEEPIN' IT REAL TALENT SHOW**

September 26, 5:30, at the Maumee Indoor Theater. Practices on Thursdays from 6:00-8:00 at Phoenix Residential.

the simple fact of the matter is that people will do any form of work if they feel they are being compensated fairly. Caregiving is highly rewarding and emotionally fulfilling work. But it is not a career you can make a living off of.

In 2021, the median wage for a direct care worker in Ohio was \$12.61. DSPs in Indiana are reimbursed at \$12.86 an hour. In California, \$14.50-- compared to the minimum wage there being \$14. Some counties in Michigan are reimbursing DSPs at as little as \$9.50 an hour. This makes it one of the lowest-paying jobs out there. You can make more working at a fast food restaurant.

But being a DSP is crucial work. It requires skill, patience, and significant training. DSPs take care of the most vulnerable people in our society. The trust put into them is immense.

Lately, agencies and individuals have had to lower their hiring standards in

order to simply get more staff in the door. This puts an already at-risk population in greater danger of exploitation and low-quality care. It also contributes to high staff turnover rates. This puts people in the position of having a revolving door of constantly changing staff, rather than dedicated caregivers they can form true connections with.

The demand for DSPs has never been greater. More people are disabled now than ever before. COVID-19 is considered a mass-disabling event. Advances in healthcare mean people are living longer with chronic conditions. The Baby Boomer generation has a larger population than the generations before or after it, and those born then are becoming elderly now.

DSPs should be paid enough to make caregiving a middle-class career.



## OUR NEXT MEETING

September 21st, 6:00-7:30, virtually on Zoom or in-person at the Ability Center at 5605 Monroe Street, Sylvania. Meeting dues are \$5 or \$50 for twelve months.

Using the One Love curriculum, we will discuss healthy relationships of all types: romantic, platonic, familial, and professional.