



COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT

The DSP Chronicles



Nancy Beatty

Nancy Beatty:

A Difference-making DSP at ACT Who Loves Her Work

By TOM KING

“I don’t know that there is anything challenging -- if you love to do it.”

Nancy Beatty loves it, she says.

“Who I am makes a difference.”

That is Nancy Beatty’s approach to her role as a Direct Support Professional and as a person.

Meet Nancy, a Direct Support Professional (DSP) for 14 years at Alternative Community Training Inc. (ACT) in Columbia, MO. For the past three she years she has been a DSP in ACT’s Community Integration day program and helps support 100 people at a ratio of four a day.

The spirit and soul are significant characteristics of an effective and talented DSP. Here is how she describes her approach to work – and to life.

“I have a philosophy that guides me daily and it is this saying: ‘Who I am makes a difference.’ That’s true for me and it’s true for all of the people I support and for everyone as well. It’s really important in all of the things we do.”

When you ask Nancy to describe the most enjoyable part of her work, her spirit and soul shine brightly again. “I love being here with my friends, the people I support. I like to see them complete their goals and share that success with them. It fills my day. I don’t think it is a challenge to support people. If we have a consumer who is having an off day, we help them get through the crisis and it is worth it in the end, because they figured it out and can then have a good day.”

When you ask Nancy to describe the most enjoyable part of her work, her spirit and soul shine brightly yet again.

“Those I support, of course! You would be surprised how many hugs I get every morning. I enjoy working for ACT. I enjoy the people we support, my coworkers, my bosses,” Nancy says. “I look forward to coming to work every day to

visit and to make a difference. That is why I love this job and working here at ACT.”

What got her interested in being a DSP in the first place? Her answer: “When I came to work at ACT, I needed a job and thought that this was just a place to stop off for a while. I started to see that I enjoyed coming to work and the people I support are my friends. That is why I can’t leave here!”

Before coming to ACT she was a factory worker and a housekeeper at a hospital. Her years at ACT began in 1996 as a production worker, working alongside individuals with disabilities, taking labels off tapes and sorting floppy discs. Nancy was then promoted to Team Leader for employees and a Training Specialist for persons supported. She continued in that role for about eight years.

Then she was offered another position within the warehouse where she would pull products, packing products and mailing them to various locations. Nancy was in this position for about a year and then this position ended. Nancy returned to the Team Leader position until she accepted a position in ACT’s Community Integration program.

Michelle Saunders, the Program Director for the day program, says that Nancy spends her days taking care of consumer needs, integrating the persons she supports into the community doing volunteer work and other fun activities that are meaningful and productive.

“Most of the time, I enjoy being out in the community all day,” Nancy said. “We are doing fun things in the community and are showing others in the community that people with disabilities are just like anybody else and bring value to the community.”

Away from work, Nancy spends time enjoying her five grandchildren, who range in age from 5

continued ...

At A Glance

Name: Nancy Beatty

Age: 53

Home: Columbia, MO

Position: Direct Support Professional

Where: Alternative Community Training Inc. (ACT)

Number of People She Supports: 4 at one time, with a rotation through 100

Key Quote: “I have a philosophy that guides me daily and it is this saying: ‘Who I am makes a difference.’ That’s true for me and it’s true for all of the people I support and for everyone as well. It’s really important in all of the things we do.”

How a Colleague Describes Her: “I would describe Nancy as the anchor of our Community Integration day program. She gets things going each morning and greets consumers and family members as they arrive. She communicates necessary information regarding consumers and any needs for that day. She follows the rules to a tee and is very pleasant to be around. Many consumers ask to be in her



If you would like to nominate a Direct Support Professional to be profiled in *The DSP Chronicles*, please send your correspondence to Tom King at tking@collegeofdirectsupport.com. Please briefly explain why you are nominating this person to be featured.

The Job, The People & More from Nancy Beatty

Describe the supports you provide for your clients: “Consistent with ACT’s mission, I assist persons supported to become members of their community. I take those I support to the movies, out to eat, to the library, bowling, to various volunteer activities and I encourage everyone to do as much as possible for themselves in getting out into the community.”

Tell us a little about the people you support: “I support 100 people, at a ratio of 4 each day. Consumers sign up for activities they are interested in and I facilitate supports by taking consumers to the designated activities. If I am not out in the community with consumers, I am assisting with activities at the ACT facility in the computer lab, arts and crafts room, multimedia room, gross motor area and sensory room. I support people with all kinds of abilities and unique gifts.”

What is the hardest part of the job? “It is hard to see people lose abilities that they have had in the past. I try my best to provide good support and help people from regressing in their abilities. If I am encouraging people to do as much as they can for themselves, this slows the process of regression.”

What is the most satisfying part of the job? “Seeing the people we support understand

continued from front ...

to 13. No. 6 is a granddaughter due to meet the rest of the family in April. Her oldest son is a staff sergeant in the Army. He has been in the military for 16 years and served two tours in Iraq and is now stationed at Fort Bliss, TX.

Nancy says her growth as a DSP has blossomed in the last 15 or so months. “We changed how we deliver services, so each consumer chooses their activities of choice on a daily basis. This means that the people I support each day changes,” she explained. “This is exciting and makes each day a new experience. I also think the College of Direct Support (CDS) has helped me look at a different perspective of how I do my job. I tell all new employees at ACT to go through the CDS courses because they have helped me so much in my position.”

She says that the CDS courses taught her one major thing. “I have really learned how to be a



Nancy Beatty with clients

something or have a good time doing something is so satisfying. We were driving to a volunteer site one day and began to look for items. A gentleman I was supporting had so much fun doing this that he requested that we schedule a scavenger hunt in the community. We have had a blast doing these scavenger hunts and we change the theme of the scavenger hunt each time. We look for all different kinds of things – a house with a blue roof, American flags. But the most exciting ones are looking for things at Christmas time.”

Would you (or have you) recommend this career to others and why? “I think this job is for people who are interested in making a difference in people’s lives. This job is not for everyone, but if you are open minded and set the bar high for yourself and the people you support, you can accomplish great things.”

much more effective advocate for the people I support and for our employees. The CDS opened my eyes and helped me grow as a DSP and I’m so glad I took them.”

Saunders adds that “Nancy was good before the CDS courses, but it seemed to tie it all together in her head when she went through the CDS.”

Nancy’s direct supervisor is Christina Mattson, a Program Supervisor. Here’s how she describes Nancy: “Nancy is so experienced and so connected with those people around her who she supports. She really pays attention to the needs of each person and is so compassionate, empathetic and hard working. We also put new hires with her to watch what she does and how she does it because I know they are getting excellent information from her. She’s a true role model for a DSP and a wonderful mentor.”

The DSP Chronicles

This publication introduces you to Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) from around the country and chronicles their stories as they go about the important work of direct support. They discuss the job: the challenges, the success stories, how they work with those they support and the unique ways they get the job done. DSPs are America’s quiet and unknown heroes. Their dedicated and hard work improves the lives of those they support. Many work more than one job. They are devoted to the DSP profession and to those they serve.

The DSP Chronicles are archived on our website at www.collegeofdirectsupport.com and also on the website of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals – www.nadsp.org. If you would like to nominate a DSP to be featured, please contact Tom King at 1-877-353-2767 (toll free) or email him at tking@collegeofdirectsupport.com.

CDS Partners
RESEARCH AND TRAINING
CENTER ON COMMUNITY LIVING
The College of Education
& Human Development
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA


INFORMATION

111 Center Park Drive, Suite 175 | Knoxville, TN 37922 | tel :: 877-353-2767 (toll-free) | fax :: 865-531-4708
www.collegeofdirectsupport.com