



COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT

PARTNER PROFILES

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North Carolina's Monarch and CDS Working Together on the Mission of "Helping Dreams Take Flight"



"Helping Dreams Take Flight" is more than a mission statement for

Monarch in Albemarle, N.C. We are committed to changing lives, one person at a time, by assisting those people we serve to achieve their dreams. The College of Direct Support has empowered our staff to build on the foundation of the core values of our agency. Those core values are dignity and respect, taking a person-centered approach, safety, community options, accountability, innovation, listening carefully -- every person has something to teach us; the willingness to change, learn and grow; integrity, and everyone on our staff is committed to the mission.

Monarch, formerly known as Arc Services, Inc., has been providing services in North Carolina for 25 years. Its parent company, the Arc of Stanly, has been in existence since 1948. Arc Services, Inc. began as an agency that provided services in five counties. Today, Monarch supports 3,089 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse issues from 35 counties throughout the state of North Carolina.

The name Monarch incorporates the Arc name, but also distinguishes us from other chapters of the Arc. Our agency logo includes the Monarch butterfly, which is a symbol of nature and nurture and the fine and delicate balance of a life cycle and change. While a butterfly may seem fragile, the Monarch possesses incredible strength, traveling up to 2,800 miles in its annual migration. We see the same inner strength in the people we serve and as we help them to realize their strength and their dreams. Our tag line "Helping dreams take flight" also enables us to creatively support people with disabilities in growing toward their potential, reaching for their dreams. We believe in freedom to dream and experience, to take risks and to fail.

In North Carolina, CDS started as a grant

in 2007 through the North Carolina Providers' Council and funded by the N.C. Council on Developmental Disabilities. Monarch was awarded 200 slots for the first year of the grant project. The first kick-off was in September 2007. In October, the first class graduated, which consisted of 26 staff members. Since implementation, we have had six Kick-offs and four graduation ceremonies. Two additional graduations are scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2008, which will complete the first year of the grant. Subsequently, 116 staff have successfully completed the College of Direct Support. Those graduates have contributed to the lives of 522 people supported by our agency. Additionally, 81 staff are scheduled to complete CDS as part of the first year of the grant project.

Monarch, which employs 1,100 Direct Support Professionals, is now implementing CDS statewide. We have made the kick-off meetings and graduation ceremonies unique. At the kick-off meetings, staff members receive an individual packet about CDS and hear a presentation about CDS. Most importantly, the staff members are in a computer lab during the meeting. A Learning Administrator helps students log in to the CDS website and become familiar with navigation. They can immediately start the modules. "We have found that using a computer lab from the beginning builds the staff's confidence. The CDS lessons speak for themselves. Once the staff starts the on-line training, they love it and want to do more," said Melissa Hall, Regional Director for Monarch. In addition, graduation ceremonies have been embraced by all as a very special event. A lunch is catered for staff members and a subsequent ceremony celebrates their achievement. Local media attention for the graduation has also been a boost for the agency and staff. For the initial ceremony, the local newspaper in Albemarle published a story about the agency starting CDS, attended the first graduation ceremony and also put a picture of the first class in the

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newspaper.

A gift for completion of the course is a choice of agency paid membership in the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) to become DSP-Registered, or the staff member's own set of agency business cards. There is a noticeable increase in the staff members' pride in achieving graduation and a recognized professional status.

Our approach to CDS is a team implementation. From the Chief Executive Officer Peggy Terhune, Ph.D., to the Direct Support Professionals, we are committed to the program and its success. "We asked senior management to take all of the classes as well as the direct support staff, so they would know exactly what was being taught," Dr. Terhune said. "One of our staff, Scottie Rush, was a runner up for the Irwin Siegel Direct Support Professional of the Year award. Many of our long-term direct support staff, including Scottie, have taken the classes and found them useful. Agencies who think they are "saving money" by not using this are actually missing something that is incredibly cost effective and helps cut the cost of turnover."

Monarch, one of the largest providers in North Carolina, strives to provide quality services, each and every day. The CDS enhances the skills of the staff that provide direct care services. Before CDS, we boasted our staff retention rate of 78%, which was above the national average. Now, after CDS, we have an even better retention at 97% for the staff that have completed the CDS modules. Furthermore, we have seen an increase in our staff's job satisfaction. In the latest staff job satisfaction survey conducted in April 2008, the staff was satisfied at a rate of 84%. For all of the staff who has completed CDS, the rate is 99% job satisfaction.

We have also seen our staff improve the quality of services that they provide to the people supported. Terri Laws, Direct Support Professional-Registered, has worked at Monarch for five years at the Tri-City group home. Of the CDS she says, "Empowering someone to reach their dreams is a great privilege. When the people who Monarch supports have dreams, we look at the per-

son individually, helping them to achieve them."

The CDS curriculum has encouraged the staff to use more community resources and to think outside of the box. We have been better able to coordinate services with Vocational Rehabilitation services, the Senior Centers, with local restaurants for job opportunities, churches, other providers of services, and the Department of Parks and Recreation, to name a few.

Staff members have consistently stated that they learn a new skill after each CDS lesson, regardless if they have been employed with the agency for 15-plus years or are new to the agency. We find it refreshing that the content is challenging and rewarding for the staff. Monarch's senior management team is in the process of reviewing the College of Frontline Supervision and Management. We are now identifying managers to begin taking the CFMS so the senior managers can use it as a guide for mentoring.

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Monarch has also found an improvement in the relationships between the parent and/or guardians after taking the modules. Our DSP staff is much more consistent in the care with their loved ones. They feel more confident to answer questions that the parent may have. Overall, the staff person is a better advocate and viable member of the team for those the agency serves, and that's

because of the impact the College of Direct Support has made at Monarch. We're stronger now – like the Monarchs.

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About CDS Partner Profiles

CDS Partner Profiles highlights the activities of state and local organizations that have integrated the College of Direct Support into efforts to elevate the preparation, performance, status, and compensation of direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors and managers (FSMs). The purpose of the the CDS Partner Profiles is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities into which the CDS has been integrated. CDS Partner Profiles are written by leaders of organizations that are actually engaged in these efforts.

College of Direct Support (CDS)
www.collegeofdirectsupport.com

The College of Direct Support (CDS) and its companion College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFMS) are internet-delivered multimedia, competency-based training curricula for DSPs and FSMs supporting individuals with disabilities.

The CDS is available for review at:
collegeofdirectsupport.com

For more information about the CDS, contact Bill Tapp at bill@collegeofdirectsupport.com or Donna Kosak at donna@collegeofdirectsupport.com or call toll-free, 877-353-2767

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