



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 16, 2019

**CONTACT**

Tom Hoen  
651-793-4118

## **National Disability Provider Association Names Lisa Riley Recipient of 2019 Direct Support Professional of the Year Award**

*Recognition honors excellence in workforce providing long-term supports and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

SAINT PAUL, MN – This morning, the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) announced that Lisa Riley, a Direct Support Professional at MSS, has been named the recipient of the 2019 Direct Support Professional of the Year award. Riley joins more than four dozen other recipients of ANCOR’s 2019 Direct Support Professional of the Year awards, chosen from a field of nearly 350 outstanding nominees.

“MSS is overwhelmingly proud of Lisa, for her award recognition of course, but more importantly for her dedication and commitment to true community inclusion for the individuals we support,” said Julie Johnson, President/CEO. “We cannot think of anyone who more clearly demonstrates the power of person-centered supports, and we’re so grateful that ANCOR has recognized Lisa with this high-profile honor.”

Awarded annually since 2007, ANCOR’s Direct Support Professional of the Year awards recognize outstanding professionals who provide long-term supports and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The awards and the accompanying presentation at ANCOR’s Annual Conference were created to celebrate the important role Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play in ensuring individuals with I/DD can be included and empowered in their communities, and to raise awareness about a direct support workforce in crisis. Nationally, turnover rates near 50 percent amount to a significant shortage of DSPs.

“I started my career in the field of disability supports as a DSP, and so I know just how critical DSPs are to supporting individuals in their quest to live their best and most fulfilling lives,” said Robert Budd, President of ANCOR and Chief Executive Officer at FREE, Inc, in Old Bethpage, New York. “DSPs rarely receive the recognition they deserve, and for that reason I’m proud of our association for recognizing Lisa and all of her significant contributions to the lives of the individuals supported by MSS.”

Barbara Merrill, ANCOR’s Chief Executive Officer, added: “I often describe DSPs as ‘community navigators.’ Far more than just caregivers, DSPs do it all. From navigating civic life to supporting individuals to create a sense of community around them, DSPs make magic in their communities every



single day. These awards represent just a fraction of the recognition that individuals like Lisa deserve.”

The 2019 Direct Support Professional of the Year awards will be presented in a ceremony in Portland, Oregon, on May 8, 2019, at ANCOR’s Annual Conference, *Bridges to Better Outcomes*. Members of the press interested in attending the awards presentation should contact Sean Luechtefeld, ANCOR’s Director of Communications, at [sluechtefeld@ancor.org](mailto:sluechtefeld@ancor.org) or 703.535.7850, ext. 100.

###

**About ANCOR**

*For nearly 50 years, the American Network of Community Options and Resources ([ancor.org](http://ancor.org)) has been a leading advocate for the critical role service providers play in enriching the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). As a national nonprofit trade association, ANCOR represents 1,600+ organizations employing more than a half-million professionals who together serve more than a million individuals with I/DD. Our mission is to advance the ability of our members to support people with I/DD to fully participate in their communities.*

**About MSS**

*MSS ([mssmn.org](http://mssmn.org)) is a Day and Employment Services provider for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). Each year, MSS empowers more than 600 individuals to live the life they choose by providing opportunities and developing partnerships built on collaboration and community engagement. MSS has six locations throughout the Twin Cities and has grown deep roots in our local business and creative arts communities. Throughout 2019, MSS will be celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> year of providing services!*