

Immediate Release
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MARIA CORDOVA NAMED ANCOR 2010 DSP OF THE YEAR

Awards program honors those providing community-based support for people with disabilities

NEW ORLEANS – The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) today honored Maria Cordova of Adelante Development Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico as the 2010 Direct Support Professional of the Year. The Direct Support Professional Recognition Award program was started by ANCOR in 2007 to acknowledge the commitment and courage of the direct support professionals (DSP) who work to ensure community inclusion and full participation for hundreds of thousands of Americans with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities. Cordova was named the national winner among 231 nominations submitted for the competition. Forty additional DSPs received awards as best of the best in their respective states and the District of Columbia.

Despite an unstable economy and record high unemployment, particularly for those with disabilities, Ms. Cordova garnered an incredible 115 jobs for Adelante's persons served. An effective advocate, Maria established positive relationships with 57 new employers and single-handedly coordinated a job fair. Realizing the need for job candidates to look the part, she created the Clothing Closet and acquired donations of professional attire for client job interviews.

ANCOR President Peter Kowalski presented the ANCOR 2010 Direct Support Professional of the Year Award to Ms. Cordova during an awards ceremony at the ANCOR Management Practices Conference in New Orleans, LA. "Unemployment is especially high among those with disabilities, which makes Maria Cordova's achievement all the more impressive," noted Kowalski. "She is making an incredibly valuable social and economic contribution to Albuquerque's community-at-large." He went on to announce that in recognition of the accomplishments of all of this year's winners, the National Association of Direct Support Professionals is honoring them with complimentary one-year memberships. Also during the ceremony, Bill Tapp, national director of the College of Direct Support (CDS), praised Ms. Cordova's exceptional job performance and presented her with a VISA gift card. He made known that CDS would be awarding VISA gift cards to all state winners as well.

"There were so many inspiring and deserving nominees that it was difficult to choose the final winners," said Renee Pietrangelo, ANCOR CEO. "ANCOR takes great pride in recognizing and honoring the remarkable work done by these professionals. We congratulate Maria Cordova and the other 40 for their stand-out achievements."

The ANCOR Direct Support Professional Recognition Award is judged on criteria in concert with the overall philosophy of ANCOR's National Advocacy Campaign to raise awareness and compensation for the direct support workforce. Among other criteria, nominees are judged on their effectiveness in building social networks, meaningful and productive participation in the community for the people they serve and advocating or effecting change on behalf of people with disabilities.

ANCOR announced the winners from 39 states and the District of Columbia as State Direct Support Professional of the Year recipients during the ceremony in New Orleans. They will

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receive their awards from ANCOR and the gift cards from CDS in conjunction with ANCOR's Governmental Activities Seminar, September 13, 2010, in Washington, D.C. Vignettes showcasing the individual stories of all winners will be posted at www.youneedtoknowme.org.

2010 State Direct Support Professional Award Winners

Arizona: Sarah Joswick, RISE Services, Inc., Mesa

Arkansas: Jessica Dunnick, Arkansas Enterprises for the Developmentally Disabled, Inc., Little Rock

California: Mallika Zavalza, Dungarvin California, LLC, Santa Rosa

Colorado: Rita Hirsch, Community Advantage, Greeley

Connecticut: Susan Hancock, Ability Beyond Disability, Bethel

District of Columbia: Rachel Houston, St. John's Community Services

Delaware: Rebecca Loller, ResCare/VOCA DE, Newark

Florida: Lucinda McGruder, United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Florida, Pensacola

Georgia: Willie Grove, EnAble of Georgia, Roswell

Illinois: Maria Rivera, Misericordia, Chicago

Indiana: Cathy Peters, Dungarvin Indiana, LLC, Portage

Iowa: Barb Edsill, Exceptional Persons, Inc., Waterloo

Kansas: Eric Hammond, Rosewood Services, Inc., Great Bend

Kentucky: Deborah Robertson, Community Alternatives Symsonia, Benton

Louisiana: Linda Gant, Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Pineville

Maine: Dawn Doak, Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Portland

Maryland: Sheila Washington, Chimes Maryland Vocational Services, Baltimore

Massachusetts: Karen Dooley, WCI (Work, Community, Independence), Waltham

Minnesota: Kim Sirek, Mount Olivet Rolling Acres, Victoria

Missouri: Ola Pennington, St. Louis Arc, St. Louis

Montana: Nate Byrne, Family Outreach, Inc., Bozeman

Nebraska: Kathie Chisholm, Community Alternatives Nebraska, Lincoln

Nevada: Ann Stirling, Dungarvin Nevada, LLC, Carson City

New Hampshire: Dambar Kadariya, Moore Center Services, Inc., Manchester

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New Jersey: Marie Quilter, Neighbours, Inc., Princeton

New Mexico: Stacy Roanhorse, Dungarvin New Mexico, LLC, Albuquerque

New York: Gavriel Sienov, HASC Center, Brooklyn

North Carolina: Felicia Haywood, Easter Seals UCP NC, Charlotte

Ohio: Addie Moore, Outlook of America, Ottawa

Oklahoma: Karen Clark, Dungarvin Oklahoma, LLC, Norman

Oregon: Sekou Dolley, Dungarvin Oregon, LLC, Portland

Pennsylvania: Barb Sanders, Erie Homes for Children & Adults, Inc., Erie

South Dakota: Twila Baade, Oahe, Inc., Pierre

Tennessee: Jermaine Favors, Open Arms Care Corporation, Ooltewah

Texas: Velma Winston, ResCare, Inc., Houston

Vermont: Lynn Brooks, Families First, Brattleboro

Virginia: Justin Orndorff, Community Alternatives Virginia, Gore

Washington: Carla Stevens, ResCare, Inc. dba Creative Living Services, Seattle

West Virginia: Donna Keister, Potomac Center, Inc., Romney

Wisconsin: Jennifer Sabally, Dungarvin Wisconsin, LLC, Milwaukee

Through its National Advocacy Campaign, ANCOR advocates for increased federal funding to support training opportunities and higher wages for DSPs employed by private providers. ANCOR is committed to passage of HR 868, The Direct Support Professional Fairness and Security Act of 2009. This federal legislation would increase Medicaid funding for support and services for people with disabilities specific to increase wages for community-based DSPs. People with disabilities would benefit through stabilization of this high turnover workforce. Direct support services are funded through Medicaid reimbursements; reimbursement rates are set by state governments.

About ANCOR

The American Network of Community Options and Resources is the premier national association representing more than 850 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to more than 385,000 individuals with disabilities. As a nonprofit organization, ANCOR successfully addresses the needs and interests of private providers before Congress and federal agencies, continually advocating for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families. The ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign was established to provide a focus on this critical workforce issue. For more information about the DSP workforce shortage visit www.youneedtoknowme.org.

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