

## National Credentialing Opportunity for Direct Support Professionals

**T**he National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) has a new credentialing program for direct support professionals working in community human services.

The Alliance, a nation-wide coalition of organizations and individuals, is committed to strengthening the quality of human services by strengthening the direct support workforce. They believe that service participants and direct support professionals are partners in the move towards self-directed services and in complimenting and facilitating the growth of natural supports.

The purpose of the new, voluntary credentialing program is to provide national recognition for the contributions and competencies of direct support professionals who meet certain standards.

The career path begins with a registration level (DSP-Registered). Open to direct support professionals with at least 6 months of experience, applicants must demonstrate a clear criminal background check and submit a letter indicating that all required training and orientation has been completed. In addition, applicants must provide a letter of intended professional commitment that describes his/her values, commitment to and purpose for entering the profession. They must also sign a commitment to adhere to the NADSP Code of Ethics.

Once registered, professionals can complete training in the key competencies of empowerment, communication, planning, ethical practice and advocacy to advance to the next level of credentialing: a fully certified Direct Support Professional (DSP-Certified). This level recognizes DSPs who demonstrate competence across

*"...people needing support are more likely to fulfill their life dreams if they have well-trained, experienced and motivated people at their side in long-term, stable, compatible support relationships..."*

- Mark Olson, President,  
the National Alliance for Direct  
Support Professionals

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...offering  
**information &  
inspiration**  
to individuals with  
disabilities and  
their families  
as they direct their  
own supports and  
services



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**SAVE THE DATE: October 16**

*Pushing the Limits: A Conference on Employment  
for African Americans with Disabilities*

*...see story on page 2*

# PUSHING THE LIMITS:

*A Conference on the Employment of African Americans with Disabilities*

**Pushing the Limits** is a conference for individuals with disabilities and others who have a vested interest in improving the employment outlook for African Americans with disabilities. The goal is to provide useful information on available resources and opportunities that will enable positive outcomes.

The day begins with a welcome from James W. Smith, Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services. He will be joined by Javier Robles, Deputy Director, Division of Disability Services.

The morning will feature a provider agency panel discussion with representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services; the Division of Developmental Disabilities; the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired; New Jersey Protection & Advocacy; and the Division of Mental Health Services. Later, a consumer panel discussion will feature perspectives of people with disabilities.

The lunchtime keynote address will be presented by New Jersey entrepreneur and national speaker, LeDerick R. Horne (see box, right).

In the afternoon, conference attendees can choose from workshops on the following topics:

- Transition
- Career Preparation
- The Entrepreneurial Approach
- Transportation
- Work Incentives
- Legal Rights
- Technology in the Workplace

One of the workshops, Race, Diversity and Disability will initiate a frank discussion on issues unique to African Americans with disabilities.

The event is funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services, and New Jersey WINS (Work Incentive Network Support), in partnership with a broad range of social, civil rights and disability advocacy organizations.

## **Pushing the Limits: Conference & Job Fair**

**October 16, 2006**

**8:00 AM to 4:30 PM**

The Sheraton Hotel at Woodbridge Place  
515 Route One South, Iselin, NJ 08830

*This event is free, but pre-registration is required:*

**1-888-285-3036 (Press Option 2)**

***Dress for Success...***

***A Job Fair***

*will take place from 10AM - 3PM*

### ***More on the Keynote Speaker...***

*LeDerick R. Horne spent most of his time in school believing he did not have much of a future. A severe learning disability combined with low self-esteem led him to doubt he would be able to go to college or pursue a meaningful career. But with support for his disability offered at Middlesex Community College, Horne became an outstanding student, transferred to New Jersey City University and graduated with honors in 2003 with a degree in Mathematics.*

*Since then, Horne has become the head of his own property management company, Horne & Associates, LLC. He was appointed the Board Chair of Project Eye-To-Eye, a natural mentoring program for students with learning disabilities. He is recognized as a national speaker and advocate for people with disabilities. He has facilitated workshops, delivered keynote presentations, and spoken to thousands of students, teachers, and service providers about his experiences.*

# Disability Mentoring Days Create Community Connections



Disability mentoring brings students and young people with disabilities together with potential *employers* and careers; it also brings motivated, hard-working potential *employees* into the workplace. It is a “win-win” for all involved.

On October 18 & 19, New Jersey will participate in national Disability Mentoring Days. Co-sponsored by Allies, Inc., and The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), the two-day event will offer career exploration and job shadowing experiences to students and young people with disabilities.

According to Andrew Imparato, President and CEO of the AAPD, the national sponsor, “Disability Mentoring Days help to create a pipeline of qualified workers and give people with disabilities greater direction and motivation.”

*Allies, Inc. is an independent non-profit organization helping individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives in the community. For more information, about Mentoring Days in New Jersey, contact Kelly Jiras at [KJiras@allies-nj.org](mailto:KJiras@allies-nj.org); log on to at [www.alliesnj.org](http://www.alliesnj.org) or call call Allies Inc. at (609) 689-0136.*

Mentors often come away with a new sense of confidence and excitement about the world of work. “I had a wonderful experience,” said Maureen, a first time mentee who shadowed an employee in a non-profit organization. “It was so refreshing to work with someone who was open to finding creative ways for me to do jobs others would ordinarily think I couldn’t do!”

Mentors have eye-opening experiences as well. “I never thought that a person with a disability could work in my shop,” said one mentor. “Now, I know that it’s the person’s skills, not what he looks like, or what devices he uses. As long as he can find a way to do the job then, well, he’s qualified.” This mentor hired his mentee and two other mentees for holiday help in his shop.

On October 19, participants will have an opportunity to speak about their experiences at the 5th Annual Transition Conference, sponsored by Allies, Inc., held in Jamesburg, NJ.

## Credentials continued from cover

15 professional skill areas, acquired through education/training, on the job experience and demonstration of professional skills.

At this level, a DSP must have completed an approved educational or training program (200 instructional hours and 3000 on the job hours) and had two years continuous work with a community human service employer (an individual with a disability or a provider organization). In addition, the DSP must submit a professional resume; a letter of support/recommendation; and a portfolio with work samples that demonstrate competence and skill in key areas.

Re-certification is required every two years.

The third level of NADSP credentialing (DSP-Specialist) recognizes professionals who have specialized training and who have demonstrated competence in providing specialized support to individuals with disabilities in community human services. It includes four specialist areas: Positive Behavioral Support, Health Support, Inclusion and Supervision & Mentoring.

For more information, call visit the Association’s website at [www.nadsp.org](http://www.nadsp.org).

## new directions

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The views and opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the Division of Developmental Disabilities or the Council, its staff or its volunteer members.

*Your letters and stories are welcome. Program participants and/or their families who submit published stories will be paid \$100.*

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## HELP WANTED

**Support Persons Needed** - Make a positive impact on someone's life. Provide one on one support to adults with developmental disabilities. Positions are part-time, with flexible hours and competitive pay. We have openings in Somerset, Mercer, Middlesex, and surrounding counties. Applicants must possess a positive work ethic and have reliable transportation.

*Please reply to Tammi Totten at 732-262-8020 or e-mail [ttotten@efnj.com](mailto:ttotten@efnj.com)*

**Sign Language Teacher** - Part time professional opportunity in Bergen County one hour a week, for a sign language teacher to work with a young man who has knowledge of sign language and uses it to communicate.

*Call Marva at 201-794 -7099 or e-mail [emilyteach@aol.com](mailto:emilyteach@aol.com).*

## new directions

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