

The Announcements



Save a Tree! read us online

If you would like to receive this publication via email instead of a paper edition, please email us at carettx@dsswtx.org. Also, you may find all of our past newsletters online at www.dsswtx.org/caretx.

Attendant of the Year nominations due

We are still accepting nominations for our Attendant of the Year award. If you feel you have an extraordinary attendant, please mail or email us with the reasons why. Tell us the story of your attendant and why they are so wonderful and your attendant could win a prize worth over \$250. Runner-Ups will also receive a gift.

We want to
hear from
you!



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April 1, 2010

Client Highlight meet katelyn

My name is Josh Bachand and I am a Program Director for the Fort Worth office. I saw your request for amazing clients and really felt that I should tell you about Kate.

Katelyn is a 16-year-old client with Cerebral Palsy and epilepsy. She had a stroke that left one side of her body weak. She has more health-related issues that, for the sake of brevity, I will not go into now. I'm also skipping over it because it doesn't summarize her as a person. It doesn't even come close.

Kate is one of the most dynamic people I have ever had the privilege of working with. She is, not to put too fine a point on it, a great example of what humanity is capable of. She doesn't ignore her health issues; she just doesn't allow them to slow her down. She is home schooled, but not because she can't keep up- quite the opposite in fact. She is a very intelligent young woman, and last time I checked was continuing work on a novel. She has completed various shorter works, but now she wants something "challenging". This from a 16-year-old who has difficulty using one side of her body. She is very interested in music and loves The Beatles. She participates in music therapy



**"It's people like Kate that make
this career so rewarding."**

and is currently learning the art of songwriting to help improve the results of her music therapy sessions.

What, you may ask, does the future hold for Kate? At present she is taking a sabbatical from her ongoing volunteer position in the cardiac unit of the hospital to allow her more time for the supplementary college courses she is taking to help prepare her for college. This is necessary because she has decided that she would like to study medicine. In Liverpool. England. Courage doesn't even begin to cover it.

As you can see, I am a member of the Katelyn Fan Club. It's hard not to be. If you speak with her yourself you will find that she is a very humble, down to earth girl with absolutely no avarice. There's not a mean bone in her body. I apologize for going on and on, but it's people like Kate that make this career so rewarding. If I can help in any way, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,
Josh

Is there someone in your life who inspires you? Share their story with us by emailing carettx@dsswtx.org.

Katelyn volunteering in the cardiac unit of the hospital.



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Our Family dssw/lifespan/cds in texas

DSSW has two sister companies. LifeSpan Home Health and CDS in Texas. It can be pretty confusing to keep track of what our family of companies do, so here is a synopsis.



DSSW is one of the largest providers of support services to people with disabilities and the elderly in the State of Texas. We operate Direct Service Agencies in 10 cities across the state with our corporate office located in San Antonio. Our services are provided through Medicaid waiver programs. Our services include: Attendant Services, Nursing, Therapies, Home Modifications, Adaptive Aids. Our programs include: CLASS, PHC, DBMD.



DSSW acquired LifeSpan Home Health in 2005. We provide pediatric services, intermittent and long term adult care, and a full range of elder care home health services.

We are a Medicare certified home health agency with our parent office in San Antonio. LifeSpan now operates branch offices in nine other cities across Texas. Our services include: Skilled Nursing, Therapies, Home Health Aides, Attendant Care.

Services are provided by our state licensed home care agencies and paid through arrangements with Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance companies, and private pay.



DSSW formed CDS in Texas in 2008 to provide the consumer directed services option to clients across the state. In CDS the client directs their own attendant care. They are the employer, responsible for hiring, training, and managing their attendants. CDS in Texas provides the client with orientation and ongoing support, acting as both a payroll agent and human resources department.

Our programs include: Community Attendant Services, Community Based Alternatives, Deaf Blind Multiple Disabilities, Primary Home Care, Family Care, Personal Care Services, Home and Community based Service, Community Living Support Services, Medically Dependent Children Program

Personal Care Services does your child qualify?

Personal Care Services (PCS) is a Medicaid benefit available to clients under the age of 21, who have physical, cognitive, or behavioral limitations related to a disability, or chronic health condition that inhibits the client's ability to accomplish activities of daily living.

Examples of Help Include:

- Bathing/Toileting/Hygiene
- Dressing/Grooming
- Feeding/Meal Preparation
- Walking/Movement
- Housekeeping/Laundry

Do you or your child need help with these tasks? Is that due to a physical, mental, or behavioral limitation? Is the limitation related to a disability, physical or mental illness, or a health problem that lasts for a long time? Are you or your child on Medicaid? You might be eligible to receive help with the above daily tasks.

Call LifeSpan Home Health for more information at 1-877-434-3153.



Call LifeSpan to see if your child might qualify for Medicaid's PCS Benefit.

Coping with Caregiving caring for yourself

This is Part Five in our series dealing with the stresses of caregiving. The last article discussed asking for and accepting help from others. This article covers steps you can follow to maintain your mental and physical health

Admit and Express Your Emotions

Caring for a loved one with a disability is difficult. With it comes a slew of emotions. You may feel love, sadness, guilt, anger, fear, hope, resentment, joy, frustration, and even ambivalence. Sometimes you may feel all of them in the same day! These emotions may seem conflicting and confusing but they are normal. They are neither "good" nor "bad", nor a reflection of how much or how well you care. You are allowed to have your emotions. What is important is how you handle them. When you can admit to and accept these different feelings you are closer to understanding and controlling them.

Be it a spouse, friend, clergyman, support group, or counselor, find someone you trust with whom you can talk openly about what you are going through. Denying and repressing emotions cause the body to internalize them. This leads to fatigue, irritability, depression, and physical problems. It also can have a bearing on your judgment and decision making skills.

Some feelings are hard to share directly with others. If this is the case, find an indirect release like writing it down, vigorous exercising, or punching a pillow.

Constructive Communication

When expressing a controversial emotion like anger or resentment it is easy to upset or offend the other person. We can be manipulative or hostile. We can try to "get even" or cause guilt. This is destructive and makes the situation worse and the conflict escalate.

A healthy way of confronting conflict is to express yourself in terms of what you are feeling and why. For example, "I feel angry because you forgot to make Amy's doctor appointment." This is an "I" statement. Using "I" statements takes out the accusation from the discussion and creates a better environment in which the conflict can be addressed. To do this, avoid "you" or blaming statements that imply the other person is responsible for your feelings. Blaming statements, like "You always let me down," or "You don't care" cause the other person to feel defensive and threatened. Saying "I feel, I need, I expect, I believe" are more helpful. Also, avoid the words "always" and "never". They are rarely true and will only cause the other person to deny the statement.

As well, if you feel unappreciated and need recognition, then say something. Everyone is taken for granted from time to time. It usually is not the intention of the other party and all they need is a little reminder. If you do not communicate your needs then it is unfair to be upset with someone for not reading your mind. Oh, and never un-



derestimate the curative powers of a heartfelt apology. When under stress, you may say something hurtful. Help heal the wounds with a simple "I'm sorry."

Staying Healthy

It may be easy, but, neglecting to keep your body healthy has long-term consequences not only for you but for whoever needs your care. It is critical to maintain proper diet, sleep, and exercise. Also, pay attention to any health problems you already have.

Take it one step at a time. Are you an unhealthy eater? Introduce better eating habits into your life one week at a time. Your energy will increase along with a positive attitude. If your sleep is regularly interrupted, look into respite to help you catch up.

Then there is the almighty exercise. It can be daunting to start; but the benefits are too great to ignore. It promotes better sleep; it reduces stress and tension; it battles depression, lifts spirits, and increases energy. It can also seem like one more demand on your time! Over the next few days, brainstorm how you can incorporate exercise into your daily routine. Regularly go for walks with your loved one. Do stretching exercises while you are watching TV or talking on the phone. Find an activity you enjoy (or at least one that isn't too much of a chore) and do it for 20-30 minutes three times a week.

Caregivers tend to place their own needs last. If you find yourself doing this, remember how not taking care of you eventually has a negative impact on the care you give. Admit and express your emotions to yourself and someone you trust. Communicate in a healthy and supportive way. Above all, do not ignore your health. If you want to commit yourself to caring for your loved one as best you can, then you must commit to taking care of yourself as well. Besides...it feels good. You deserve to feel good.

Please email questions, comments, or concerns to:
caretx@dsswtx.org