



2020 Alliance Direct Support Professional of the Year Nomination Form

Douglas Love, Employment Specialist Developmental Disabilities Resource Center

Douglas Love brings a rich and fresh approach in supporting and developing individuals and families through individualized work on personal and professional goals, leading to increased independence and growth. He is a part of the Employment Services team as an Employment Specialist at DDRC, and his impact has been significant and progressive toward the Employment First goals of Colorado.

Douglas is the kind of person who naturally sees the unique and deeper qualities that a person embodies. As he works with job seekers, his intuition is to always ask people what next steps they want to take in their careers and how he can help them move forward. Douglas promotes growth for the employees he supports, whether that be in learning a new task, meeting a goal or pursuing a promotion. As Douglas does this, he uses person-centered approaches that support each person in the way that they prefer. For example, Douglas assisted a Walmart associate as the associate pursued a promotion and store transfer. Douglas strived to understand who this person is, his unique attributes and skills, and how he wanted communication and to be supported. Douglas helped this employee as he prepared for and navigated his application, interview and subsequent testing, all while building up his confidence in himself to achieve this goal. This employee has now received the transfer and promotion to Shoe Department Manager. Every time Douglas visits him at Walmart, he notices how the shoe department is spotless and impeccably organized! Additionally, Douglas has helped this person recognize how he can be an advocate for others with developmental disabilities. Douglas is quick to highlight for this person that he has worked to own his own home, have a vehicle and obtain his recent promotion. Due to Douglas's ability to recognize and nurture a person's innate qualities, this man is now exploring how he can be an advocate and encourage others with and without developmental disabilities to pursue their dreams and goals.

Douglas also initiates new approaches, excitement, interest and potential for individuals currently receiving other types of day program and vocational services by getting to know them and their interests and goals, and by sharing possible job opportunities. Douglas has been able to open up the world of employment to many people who had not previously considered it. He shares about the different businesses that he will visit to support the employees he works with. These conversations have led to an influx of referrals for employment services from people who now feel confident to pursue new opportunities. For example, one person began attending day program and has had significant involvement with the justice system. Through getting to know Douglas, this person was able to identify his personal and professional goals and discuss his fears about how his legal concerns will affect his ability to reach those goals. Douglas has helped this person solidify a step-by-step plan for pursuing his goals and offered him ways to let go of the things he cannot control as he walks along his path to employment. Douglas and this person are now working together to pursue employment, with the goal that employment will also allow the individual to partake in travel, fishing and other interests.

It is through Douglas's personable, person-centered and growth-minded approaches that these pathways are possible. He is influencing how individuals think about themselves, what they have to offer, and he is helping colleagues, families and employers to embrace opportunities.

In our employment team, Douglas has been a leader and role model for his colleagues. He demonstrates the philosophy of Employment First daily and advocates that anyone who wants to work *can* work and contribute to our community.