

OSDA 2007

ESDY Award Winners

**ESDY AWARDS FOR 2007
PRESENTED at the 10TH ANNIVERSARY OSDA CONFERENCE**

What is an ESDY Award? It is an award presented at the annual conference of the Ohio Self-Determination Association. In order to be nominated for this award, you must be a person who has played a role in advancing the concepts of self-determination. Nominees are then evaluated based on creativity, how they have supported the principles of S-D and their contribution made toward systems change.

THE ESDY AWARD WINNERS FOR 2007 WERE AS FOLLOWS:

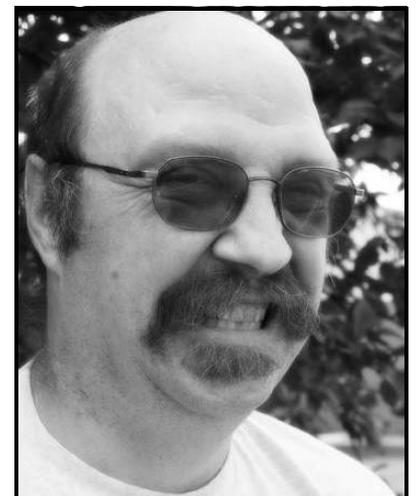
ESDY Award #1: Elizabeth Prather -Professional

Ms. Prather's career has been distinguished by her progressiveness and drive to discover and build upon the unique strengths of the individuals we serve. As the current Superintendent of the Richland County Board of MRDD, a former Board Member and past President of the Ohio Association of Adult Services (OAAS), she has truly been an outstanding leader in this field, while having a principal role in the furtherance of the self-determination movement. She is truly committed to assisting individuals in achieving a quality of life that they determine; she is also focused on positive outcomes. As OAAS so eloquently stated, "Liz embodies the spirit of self-determination and has demonstrated her commitment to its principles and core values."



ESDY Award #2: Daniel Cassell - Self Advocate

Outstanding, dependable, impeccable work ethic, amazing versatility.....These are just a few of the words describing Daniel Cassell. For 14 years, six days a week, regardless of the weather conditions, Daniel has faithfully reported to work at the Meijer Department Store in Marion, Ohio. Daniel, who realizes that a good job is a privilege, never takes his employment for granted. He constantly strives for excellence and through his endeavors, has learned positive ways to deal with stress and a variety of other issues. Because of his success, Dan can now work in a variety of areas with ease. He stocks shelves, waits on customers, runs the cash register and takes inventory. "Dan the Man" as he is known by his co-workers, even beat his manager in a swimming pool sales contest!!! Daniel, you serve as a wonderful example for all employees.



ESDY Award #3: Erin Riehle for Project Search

Erin Riehle, co-founder and Director of Project Search, has a natural way of bringing life to the principles of self-determination. She is a wonderful role model for all professionals in the field of MRDD. With Erin's assistance, the Project Search program has afforded many training and employment opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities. Many other rehabilitation programs from across the United States and beyond have traveled to Cincinnati to learn more about Project Search. It is the hope and dream of Erin, and Project Search, that they are able to replicate the success of this program to change the lives of even more individuals with disabilities. Erin has helped to build a "Program of Excellence" which enables individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve their dreams and become contributing community members.



ESDY Award #4: Michael Coombes - Self Advocate

What can be said about Mike Coombes? Wow!! What an example to any individual with a disability who has a dream. Mike managed to achieve one of his dreams by opening his own pop stand with the help of Micro-Enterprise training, grant funds and a large circle of support...and don't forget his determination. Mike was a volunteer firefighter for 10 years and has developed solid relationships with the other firefighters, as well as members in his community. Due to Mike's skills in creating his own elaborate system of providers, friends and co-workers, Mike has no difficulty getting to where he needs, or wants, to be. Mike is serving his 2nd term as a People First of Ohio Board Officer (he is currently the Vice-President) and was one of the "founding fathers" of the Medina County Chapter of People First.



ESDY Award #5: Michael Drops - Parent and Professional

As a parent and advocate of a daughter with Down Syndrome, Michael has positively affected the lives of others who have loved ones with disabilities. Michael has served as a volunteer for various organizations while raising a family and working full-time in the banking industry. In 2005, Michael retired from the banking industry, but continues to work part-time for the Center of Mental Retardation, where he helps parents in ensuring that their children are receiving the services and supports they need. According to Cynthia Norwood, the agency's Executive Director, "Michael's extraordinary personal commitment to improving life for his own daughter, as well as others, is evident in his thousands of hours of volunteer work in this field. He does it because he is passionate and recognizes the importance of giving back to the community." (Right: Michael Drops, his wife, Kitti, and their family)



ESDY Award # 6: Gloria Tiller - Self-Advocate

Gloria is a person who can light up the whole room with her beautiful smile. She has overcome many barriers in her achievements. In trying to promote self-advocacy and self-determination in others, she states that you must tell people how you feel and WHAT you want. And if they don't listen, try again – BE PERSISTENT. She states that you should never let others try to talk you out of your dream – because it is yours – YOU OWN IT. Gloria believes in being the driving force of her own life. Therefore, she started her own business – selling T-Shirts. She is a firm believer that a good support system is very important; but most of all, you must believe in yourself. Well, Gloria, you made us all believers too!



The Steven Cooley Award: - Dana Charlton

Who in the field of MRDD doesn't know Dana Charlton? She spent more than 30 years working for the Ohio Department of MRDD; she has been a pioneer in bringing about Self-Determination in Ohio. Over the past 9 years, Dana has been in the forefront of promoting the self-determination initiative in Ohio. She was the key person at ODMRDD who furthered the SD movement. She has diligently worked to overcome barriers in the system in order to allow individuals and their family members to have meaningful choice and control in their lives. Dana has not only dedicated her life's work to helping persons with disabilities, she has volunteered her personal time, as well. Dana's accomplishments, too many to list, are nothing short of amazing. Dana has been an inspiration to all who know her. Dana, it is a privilege and honor to have been able to work with you. You are an extraordinary woman and most certainly deserving of this award.



10th Anniversary Self-Determination Award: - Nancy Richards

It has been said that Nancy was born self-determined. She is someone who always seems to be able to get the job done, no matter what! As the president of the Ohio Self-Determination Association for the past two years, she has gone way above and beyond in increasing the mission and purpose of OSDA. She has also assisting in increasing opportunities for OSDA representatives to work with the ODMRDD in addressing policy issues that affect people with disabilities. In addition, she has been closely involved in preparing for this conference and the book soon to be published by OSDA. Nancy even has her own Self-Determination Award in Delaware County—named after her. It is rare to meet someone like Nancy who can juggle so many different balls at the same time – which is why she is perfect for this award. To Nancy Richards, the person who has done more for self-determination in Ohio than anyone we know!!!



The Ohio Self-Determination Association extends their heartfelt congratulations to all of the 2007 ESDY award winners!!!!