

Brianna's Story

The wages we are offered are mind blowing, I personally know a few people in the food industry that make more money than we do and they only serve food. It is impossible for me to pay my bills; rent, electric, car insurance, and feed my kids on this income alone. Yes I know it was my choice to have two amazing children but it isn't my choice to only get paid what I do without moving careers. DSP's choose the joy of the job over the wages time and time again because we love what we do but why should it have to be a choice. People don't just wake up one day and say "I'm going to start being a DSP" they are born with that desire. What I mean is anyone can make a burger at a restaurant but not everyone can help another human learn to tie their shoe, bathe, show them there is more to the world than their house or group home, and teach them life is amazing and full of new things to try and do. That is what DSP's do every day; we give our individuals the choices and chances everyone should get in their everyday lives. Why don't we make it so the DSP's who are good at what they do don't have to choose between what they love as a job and what pays more?

I have worked for CAS for just about a year and I can tell the individuals I support are affected tremendously by the amount of turnover in their staff. One lady will sit in a corner and not ask for help from a new staff she doesn't know. She calls everyone "sweetie" because she has a hard time remembering names. She has stated many times she doesn't like getting new staff in her home because it takes her so long to get to know them or remember them. Another individual cannot see so he has to learn the sound of the staff's voice, the smell they have. That takes time and he also states it is very hard and frustrating for him to always have to learn and teach the new staff. This is just 2 of 22 individuals I personally know and care for on a daily basis. Numerous times I have had people say please don't leave we want you to stay. That statement alone shows how much turnover affects the lives of the individuals. If you want to keep all individuals safe, happy, and secure there has to be a change. It is pretty bad when 90% of my coworkers are on some kind of state assistance in order to stay afloat. A lot get food stamps, OHP for their kids, and or rental assistance. I am a single mom of two kids and have to work my full time job and a part time one just to stay afloat.

What we have now is not working and our individuals are paying the price. With higher pay we will get better staff in places and staff that will be able to stay around long enough to retire. There will be less training errors throughout everywhere and less new hire training costs. Staff will be more likely to show up every day with a great attitude and not look for work elsewhere or be super tired from working more than one job.