

Living Well Disability Services Increases Wages Above Industry Standards

Despite staffing challenges in the field, local non-profit makes investment in employees

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[Mendota Heights, MN, December 4, 2019]
—Minnesota Governor Tim Walz spent a day in the life of a Personal Care Assistant, November 22nd to bring attention to the overwhelming shortage of direct care workers and resulting crisis in Minnesota. While clearly the rewards of working as a Direct Support Professional aren't always monetary, like any other employee, Direct Support Professionals must pay their bills.

Despite an inadequate State reimbursement rate, the board of directors and leadership of Living Well Disability Services recently increased its hourly rate of pay for new hires from \$12 to \$13.25/hour and raised the hourly rate of pay for tenured Direct Support Professionals. Comprehensive training and employee benefits are also provided.



DSP Jade's daily support gives Sheila C. independence & dignity

“

We must do all that we can to recognize the impact of the essential services provided by Direct Support Professionals. Individuals with disabilities are important members of our communities.”

Julie Manworren

Living Well Disability Services is a nonprofit organization that provides exceptional services that transform the lives of people impacted by disabilities. Living Well Disability Services is particularly well known for supporting people who have complex medical conditions, in addition to cognitive disabilities. It employs 550 employees.

Julie Manworren, President and CEO of Living Well Disability Services said, “Our remarkable Direct Support Professional employees transform the lives of people who need 24/7 support in order to stay alive and engage in life. Sadly, the profound value of Direct Support Professionals’ work is not adequately reflected in the state’s payment

system.”

Though many similar organizations in the field start at a dollar less per hour, Pat Connelly, Director of Human Resources said, "We prioritized this significant commitment to the staff who are the heart and soul of our mission." The raise resulted in many meaningful improvements for the staff. One employee said that prior to the raise she could not qualify for a decent apartment. After the increase, she qualified and now lives in her new home.



Living Well Disability Services is in its 47th year of operations and provides care through its 34 homes, and in individual's own homes, located in neighborhoods throughout the greater metro area. Living Well Disability Services is recognized as a Top Workplace by the Star Tribune.

Julie Manworren encouraged all Minnesotans to speak up and demand higher wages for professionals who provide care and support for individuals living with disabilities. "We must do all that we can to recognize the impact of their essential service. Individuals with disabilities are important members of our communities." Reach out to [Governor Walz](#) and [your legislators now](#) and tell them why the wages for professionals who care and support people with disabilities matters. [Click here to get more information](#) Please join us in supporting these extraordinary professionals who transform lives every day.

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