



CDS Partner Profiles

Apple Patch plows ground for CDS in Kentucky. In July '09 DSP turnover was 53%; today it is 15%.

If the three most important factors in real estate are location, location, location, then the three most important factors in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities must be inclusion, inclusion, inclusion. Apple Patch strives to provide the array of support services needed to help each individual be included and personally succeed in all aspects of their lives.

All of our 19 homes are located in wonderful neighborhoods, but Apple Patch is particularly proud to have been involved in the development of Celebration Park, a neighborhood of 76 single-family home sites

designed to include 10 homes for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

These homes are spread throughout the neighborhood and offer a wonderful opportunity for our residents to build friendships with neighbors, engage in community activities – like an annual picnic hosted by Apple Patch Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) – share facilities and become a dynamic part of the fabric of Celebration Park.

Our residents live in beautiful homes; in fact, all of our facilities are first rate, but as recently as the spring of 2009 something was missing.

One very important item was missing – a well-trained and caring staff of DSPs. In fairness, many of the staff who work in our homes and day programs were, and still are, caring individuals. The reality is that while we provided some degree of training, we had not provided them with the level of training and the tools necessary to do their jobs well.

“Turnover was high, scheduling and overtime were a nightmare, and something had to be done,” said Ann Skinner, Apple Patch’s director of Residential and Clinical Services. “In searching for answers, I found the College of Direct Support (CDS). The board approved the funding (after some serious discussion), and in July 2009 we began down the path of improving the quality of care for the individuals we support. Apple Patch was the first agency in Kentucky to use the CDS. Now, Kentucky has a statewide agreement with CDS, and this wonderful training is available to all agencies and families in Kentucky that support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

One of the most dramatic and high-impact results of using CDS is the amazing reduction in staff turnover we have experienced – 53% to 15%. That 38% reduction has not only had an incredible impact on our bottom line, with a reduction in costs associated with training and human resources work, but more importantly it has created much more staff stability in our homes and day programs to provide more effective supports by a stable workforce.

Apple Patch is located approximately 14 miles east of Louisville in Crestwood, Kentucky, and currently supports 230 individuals and employs 160 DSPs. We support the 19 homes, and three day program facilities (including TLC for individuals with dementia, early onset Alzheimer’s and autism); provide in-home community living supports and provide an array of clinical services – case management, psychological counseling, behavior support, speech, occupational and physical therapy and transportation. Two of our day programs stress continuing education and utilize smart board technology with thousands of lesson plans to help keep individuals interested and involved. ➤



Apple Patch is a 501©3 nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting a life of independence for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



The early part of the journey to improved training with CDS was filled with challenges. Many staff members were not confident enough to work on computers and/or were hesitant to embrace online learning. All new hires are introduced to CDS during their initial three days of intensive training. "At first, many DSPs were reluctant to even try, but with some guidance they found the process of accessing lessons online very easy and the information very helpful in doing their jobs," says Charice Malone, staff development coordinator. "Now they can't wait to complete one section and move on to the next."

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CDS also has been helpful for Apple Patch in meeting Kentucky's training requirements regarding rights and maltreatment. These two modules are covered during initial training and provide a wonderful foundation for all additional training. To accommodate our staff that has limited access to technology, we have redesigned our training room. It is now equipped with 10 training/work stations, all with monitors and easily connected to CDS. DSPs are encouraged to utilize the computers, and many come in an hour or two before their shifts start to study online.

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Joshua Sundquist, the manager of the Transitional Learning Center, reports that CDS has helped him and his staff better understand their jobs and their clients. They have learned tools like behavior intervention, redirection and positive reinforcement and have taken these lessons and applied them to their jobs, thus benefiting their clients. "CDS is easy to use, interesting and easily accessible for

DSPs. My staff and I will continue to fall back on this crucial education source to better our lives and the lives of those in our care," Sundquist said.

Jeff Ott, manager of the APEX (Apple Patch Experience) Center for Personal Development, is a CDS advocate. "This training helps us use different methods of support that will increase a person's quality of life. We incorporate these into our classes, and I feel that this training benefits all of us and we should continue to support this program," he explained. "CDS has increased information, job skills and general knowledge, as well as boosted confidence among all who work here. The simple format has made it easy for all employees to gain access to the courses no matter what their level of computer skills are."

Apple Patch also is active in the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) and supports its credentialing process. Nine DSPs are currently accredited, with the anticipation that there will be 30 registered DSPs by the end of summer. Pay raises totaling \$.50 an hour are available as DSPs move through the NADSP credentialing process.

"Apple Patch strives to attain quality in everything we do – quality care, quality facilities and the very highest quality of life for the individuals we support," said Apple Patch Executive Director Chris Stevenson. "As we continue on our journey to become a better agency, we recognize the College of Direct Support as a vitally important resource that helps make available the training our staff needs to provide quality care for the individuals we love and support."

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CDS Partner Profiles

CDS Partner Profiles highlights the activities of state and local organizations that have integrated the College of Direct Support into efforts to elevate the preparation, performance, status and compensation of direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors and managers (FSMs). The purpose of *CDS Partner Profiles* is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities into which the CDS has been integrated. *CDS Partner Profiles* is written by leaders or organizations that are actually engaged in these efforts.



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