

Sondra Smith 2007 TNCO Award Winner

Sondra Smith is a direct support professional with Shelby Residential and Vocational Services, Inc. (SRVS). She works for more than 60-plus service recipients at the Kramer Activity Center (KAC), a day center at SRVS. Service recipients at the Kramer Center participate in activities which improve hand/eye coordination, build pre-vocational skills, teach self-care and socialization skills, and increase their awareness of the environment and community. Sondra is always on call to help the staff, instructors, service recipients and the director with anything they might need.

Sondra is one of the first employees to arrive at work each morning. She always has a smile on her face and is usually the first to greet many people each day at SRVS... what a wonderful way to start the day!

She begins her work day by assisting the service recipients in getting off their busses and into the classrooms at the Kramer Center. It is amazing to see how pleasant and welcoming she is to everyone every day. She also has one of the most challenging jobs at the Kramer Center. Sondra helps service recipients who need to use the restroom, and even changes them when necessary. She does this work with unfailing compassion, patience and cheerfulness. There aren't many people who could bring such passion and enthusiasm to such a frustrating job.

Throughout the day, Sondra visits the Kramer Center classrooms to make sure that everything runs smoothly. She is quick to offer help without having to be asked and her cheerful, can-do attitude is appreciated by all the staff. The service recipients love her and light up whenever she is around.

Sondra also takes the lead on projects outside the scope of her job description. For instance, she decorates the entire activity center every holiday with colorful, fun decorations for everyone to admire. She also prepares special events for the service recipients to enjoy. Through her leadership, creativity and initiative, the day center held its first ever Kramer Activity Center coronation. At this event, two service recipients were named King and Queen of the Kramer Center. Sondra took it upon herself to raise the funds needed to support the event, decorated the cafeteria to look like a room right out of Buckingham Palace and found crowns and robes for the newly chosen king and queen. She also arranged for the attendees to have photos taken, invited family members, helped serve the refreshments and performed countless other tasks to ensure that the service recipients, their families and friends all had a wonderful day. Due to the success of the event, plans are underway to make it an annual tradition at SRVS.

Sondra is always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. She is a dedicated direct support professional who works quietly and eagerly and with integrity. She is a role model to all and a friend to many. For these reasons, Sondra Smith deserves the Outstanding DSP of the Year Award.



Sondra Smith celebrating her award with Katherine Wooten.



Jeffrie Bruton and Carol Branch congratulate Sondra Smith on her 2007 outstanding DSP Award at TNCO Awards Luncheon.