

Developments

Fall Edition • 2025

Inside This Edition

Heart

Commitment to
Service

Community

Commitment to
Mission

Workforce

Commitment to
Excellence



It All Comes Down to Heart

Message from the Executive Director

September 7th through the 13th marked National Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Week. Established in the United States in 2008, DSP Recognition Week honors the essential contributions of direct support professionals nationwide. It is a week-long celebration that recognizes and promotes awareness of the critical work that DSPs do every day. While initially designated by the federal government, the observance was formally endorsed by the U.S. Senate and 35 state governors by 2013. DSP Week is now an annual event the first full week in September where organizations like ProBerco proudly host celebrations to honor DSPs and frontline managers for their compassionate dedication and impact.

ProBerco has implemented a variety of initiatives over the years to reward and appreciate our DSPs and frontline managers during this national week of recognition. This year a committee comprised of our Directors organized a week of celebrations. All DSPs and frontline managers received a commemorative T-shirt and a logo pen. Directors also hosted a car-wash for any DSP or frontline manager who chose to participate.

One of the most meaningful activities was our "Wall of Praise." Family members, community partners, and managers were invited to submit personal notes of appreciation, recognizing the efforts of team members. Gift cards were awarded to randomly selected professionals whose names appeared on the wall—a small token to honor the big impact of their work.

As I read through these heartfelt notes, some inspiring themes stood out: "going above and beyond," "teamwork," "compassion," "treating people with dignity and respect," and "being positive, helpful, and showing up whenever needed." I believe it all comes down to heart—I am proud to know that we have a team of professionals who are here for exactly the right reasons and who have embraced the ProBerco mission of enriching the lives of people with disabilities and their families in their hearts.



Work Hard. Play Hard. Celebrate Together.

We had a fantastic time celebrating our dedicated ProBerco team with a day of fun at Knoebels!

Your hard work, commitment, and service do not go unnoticed — thank you for everything you do to make a difference every day!

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Success Starts Here

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Swing for a Cause

31st Annual Golf Tournament Nets Over \$50,000!

“The success of this year’s tournament is a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we come together,” said Jody Wagner, CEO/Executive Director.

We are thrilled to share the incredible success of our recent Golf Tournament, which raised over \$50,000 in support of ProBerco’s mission. This milestone is a powerful reflection of the dedication and generosity of our community—and we couldn’t have done it without **you**.

To the many businesses that sponsored, participated, and championed this event: thank you. Your contributions were instrumental in making the golf tournament a resounding success. We are especially grateful to our longtime partners whose continued support speaks volumes about their commitment to ProBerco and its mission to enrich the lives of people with disabilities, and for that, we are truly grateful.

A special shout-out goes to our raffle and auction supporters, whose enthusiasm and generosity added an additional \$10,000 to our fundraising total. From the first tee to the final bid, everyone’s contribution made an impact on the success of the event.

We are also grateful to our incredible volunteers, whose tireless dedication—from the early morning set up to the final wrap-up—made the day seamless and joyful for our golfers. A special thank you to our Golf Committee, whose passion and spirit of service truly embody the heart of our mission. Your commitment inspires us and drives our work forward, thank you.

“The success of this year’s tournament is a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we come together,” said Jody Wagner, CEO/Executive Director. “Your support strengthens our mission and allows us to continue building a more inclusive, compassionate community. We are grateful for every sponsor, golfer, volunteer, and donor who made this day possible.” 🌟

Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive future. Thank you for being part of the ProBerco family.

Memorials

In Loving Memory

We remember and honor three cherished members of the ProBerco community whose lives touched so many.

Christine Tranovich

Born in West Reading, Christine Tranovich passed away on May 5, 2025. A graduate of Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia, Christine lived and studied there until the age of 21. She then returned to the Reading area and joined ProBerco's Community Living Program, where she also participated in the CPS program. Christine brought joy to those around her and found happiness in swimming, horseback riding, and bowling with her family. Her gentle spirit and love for life will be fondly remembered.

Paulette Williams-Davis

With deep sadness, we share the passing of Paulette Williams-Davis, a devoted member of the ProBerco team for 23 years. Paulette exemplified our mission through her compassionate care, most recently supporting two gentlemen in one of our Community Living Homes. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, friend, and caregiver, whose warmth extended beyond her family to everyone she served. Paulette's kindness, dedication, and vibrant presence will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Tom Mammarella

Tom Mammarella, a beloved member of the ProBerco family since its inception, passed away peacefully on his 82nd birthday, surrounded by loved ones. Tom was a joyful presence in our Community Living, Vocational, and CPS programs, where he built lasting friendships and memories. A passionate fan of Philadelphia sports, Tom loved watching games and sharing that enthusiasm with others. His legacy of friendship and positivity will continue to inspire us.

Celebrate a Life Through the Legacy Tree Program

To honor the memory of loved ones, ProBerco offers a meaningful way to commemorate their life through our Legacy Tree Program. Supporters can purchase a Memorial Leaf, Acorn, or Foundation Stone for our mural, each engraved with a personalized message that celebrates the life and legacy of someone special.

These tribute gifts not only honor loved ones but also help grow ProBerco's Endowment Fund, ensuring continued support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community.

To learn more or to make a tribute gift please visit the donation page of our website, proberco.org. ❄️❄️❄️

Moments That Matter



Jody Wagner, CEO, shared a moment that left a lasting impression on her:

"One of our participants, who lives with cerebral palsy and relies entirely on others for his care, told his sister, 'I feel safe when I'm with Artie,' (a longtime ProBerco DSP). Reflecting on that kind of trust—when

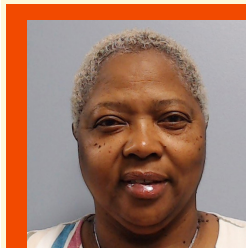
someone who depends on another person for everything, feels truly safe, is the highest compliment a DSP can receive. It made me incredibly proud."

This story is a powerful reminder of the deep relationships DSPs build and the trust they earn through consistent, compassionate care.



Maricelys Cerritos – "My proudest moment as a DSP was when I helped a gentleman go to a concert he was dreaming about going to for a while. He would always speak about wanting to see this singer in person, so when I knew the singer was coming into town I helped him get tickets and plan his day. I accompanied him to the

concert and he enjoyed every moment. At the end of the night, when I took him back home, he gave me a big hug and said 'I love you Maricelys, thank you!!!' I knew he had enjoyed himself. He didn't sit, not once, during the concert, and although the concert wasn't in his native language, he sang every song."



Deborah Covington - "Helping people realize their potential and putting a smile on their face."



Susan Dacquisto-Sturges - "I had worked with an individual for many years and got to meet his elderly parents. His mother took my hand and said 'thank you for taking care of my boy all of these years.' That filled my heart and let me know I was doing my job, and I was good at it."

DSPs Share Their Proudest Moments

Every day, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and frontline managers show up with compassion and resilience, prepared to support the individuals they serve. In this edition, we're proud to shine a light on their voices—sharing their proudest moments in their own words. From quiet victories to life-changing breakthroughs, these stories reveal the profound impact DSPs have—not only on the lives of individuals with disabilities, but on their own personal journeys as well. They also underscore the vital role DSPs play in supporting people from all walks of life, with diverse needs and backgrounds.

***"For me, working here at ProBerco is a great blessing.
It is giving and receiving love." - Felipa Vasquez Dominguez***



Andrea Gibson - "Advocating successfully for better support services so a person can go on outings, have a life coach, or have the accessibility modifications they need (are what make me proud). Helping a person learn a skill and seeing them do it confidently on their own, makes me feel good."



David Kisilu - "My proudest moment is witnessing the people I support gain significant improvement of independence and self-determination. Most people can express their needs and preferences, such as choosing what activities to do, (which) range from computer activities, delivery of meals to the community, making coffee for others, or organizing the kitchen. But others, need to overcome their fear and gain the confidence to courageously dance in music groups."



Maxime Legal - "A moment I am particularly proud of was de-escalating a very stressful situation. I was working with a person who has nonverbal autism and they become overwhelmed by any change in their routine. The task was to help them calm down and find comfort. Rather than simply redirecting them, I relied on our established communication techniques. I helped him feel secure. I remained calm and patient, giving him the space he needed without forcing any interaction. As a result, the gentleman was able to regulate his emotions and relax without the use of medication or further distress. It showed me the true value of knowing and respecting each individual's unique needs and communication styles."



Debbie Mateo - "I have many proud moments in my short time here. The first one is being hired and being totally new to this field. After that, it's just moments of pride all day, every day, it's hard to pick one. ... I'm so happy to help and meet people, and to put smiles on their faces by sitting, talking, and listening. Seeing

her in the band, I had nothing to do with it, but it made me and her proud."



Andrea Reber - "My proudest moment was when one of the ladies (I support) explained something very difficult, in a very matter-of-fact way, to her support coordinator; that was my proudest moment."



Felipa Vasquez Dominguez - "It's been almost eight years since I started my career as a DSP at ProBerco, with some insecurity because English is not my first language, but here I have learned that the best language is love. I put a lot of love into what I do and receive it multiplied backwards; the affection expressed to me by the individuals with whom I have worked all this time makes me feel that even with my mistakes as a human being, I am doing something right. For me, working here at ProBerco, is a great blessing. It is giving and receiving love." 🌟

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Creative Thanks!

The Day Services Team crafted a one-of-a-kind thank you card for the Womelsdorf Women's Club, who generously donated games and supplies. Teamwork and gratitude in action!



Victor's Colorful Puzzles

Victor finds joy in assembling intricate jigsaw puzzles. His favorite part? Seeing the finished creations hanging on the wall in the Day Services Activity Room.



Magical Moments

Friends met Mickey Mouse at Disney World—Alan even scored a fist bump from his squeaky pal!



Sweet Connections

Michele Smith CEO, Discovery Federal Credit Union, and Nikki Roman-Cruz, CFO, ProBerco, connect over ice cream. Thank you DFCU for the sweet treat!



Scoops of Happiness

DSP John treats Tony and Anthony to ice cream at Schell's—proving life's simple pleasures are the sweetest.



Well-Earned Treats

After a day of volunteering, Vocational friends swing by DFCU for a cool ice cream pick-me-up!



Champions on the Green
 Congrats to Ron Miksiewicz, Matt Miksiewicz, Colton Sterner, and Tom Lakata from East Penn Manufacturing—First Place winners at the 31st Annual Golf Tournament!



The Vocational Team served a continental breakfast for guests attending a regional OVR Training. ProBerco proudly co-hosted this event to promote employment for people with disabilities.



Nature's Joy
 Johnny soaking up sunshine and serenity in the great outdoors—a perfect example of CPS activities that celebrate personal choice and self-determination.



Universal Fun!
 The gang explored Universal Studios—vacation vibes and unforgettable memories! Thank you DSPs for making this a vacation to remember!



Gratitude in Action
 Michele Smith CEO Discovery Federal Credit Union, presents a \$1,500 donation to ProBerco. Thank you for supporting our mission! Representing ProBerco are Johnny, Kristy Vigo, Community Services Administrator, Noah, and Eloise.



Retro Vibes '80s Style
 Bring'in the Sunshine goes back to the '80s! Participants rocked retro outfits and danced to classic hits. Pictured are DSPs Jennie Hetzel and Doug Strimple, with Nick.



ProBerco

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Member of:



ProBerco enriches the lives of people with disabilities and their families by providing innovative community participation, community living, employment opportunities, and family support services.



Your support empowers individuals with disabilities to live with dignity, independence, and purpose.

Together we are building a world where everyone can thrive in the communities where they live, work, and recreate. Thank you!

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Upcoming Events

March 29, 2026
6th Annual Harmony Walk

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Awards Banquet

July 27, 2026
32nd Annual Golf Tournament