

SHARING
DOWN SYNDROME

ARIZONA

Dearest Board of Directors,

It is with a most grateful heart that I am writing to you to nominate an amazing man, Carlos Gomez to be your Outstanding DDD Manager of the Year for 2014. In my work I serve children with Down syndrome from birth through end of life. I have been working with a family who have an older son named Nathan. I have been to the mother's home many times and I truly care about this family. The mom is older and to be honest I think she is just plain tired. She loves her son but she lets him wander when he should be at home. This has been an issue for some time. As her son has aged (he is in his 40's) it has become worse.

The mother would call me feeling frustrated and yet not knowing what to do. She could not keep her son home and she told me she would just pray that God would watch over him. Well, I know that He did because He put Carlos in her path. I was especially worried one holiday weekend when the mother called me feeling very distraught. She knew she could not manage her son anymore and yet she did not know what to do.

I had spoken to her preciously about considering placing her son in a group home but of course that was difficult for her. Yet she knew she could not care for him and she knew her married children had their hands full and could not do it as well. On this one day when she called she was especially upset. She told me how her son took off and she was so worried because he never came home.

She finally called the Police and they found him wandering on the on ramp to the I- 60 right by Banner Desert Hospital. They brought him home. Another time she called the Police and they found Nathan sleeping by a dumpster. I could tell by the mother's tone, that she was at the end of her rope. She did not have the ability to keep him home and yet she did not know what to do.

I called in an incident report but it was over a holiday weekend. The woman who took my call was very kind but I asked her to please make sure whoever was on call to please call me. I knew I could tell that person more details of what was going on with this family. I knew that with privacy laws, there was a good possibility that no one would call me. I was so pleased when I received a call from Carlos Gomez. He was the person in charge of this situation.

As the mother of a 30-year-old son who has Down syndrome, my heart was so touched by how compassionate this dear man was about this adult with Down syndrome. He let me know that over that weekend it would be hard to get placement but that he would do all within his power to help this family the following Monday. And he was true to his word. He did get things going so the mother could find a good placement for her son that

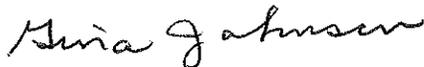
she felt comfortable with. When I went to the office to meet Carlos I was shocked to discover that he is not just a support coordinator. He is the manager of the whole DDD office. The whole time Carlos talked to me that weekend, he never let on that he held this high position. I just thought he was a typical support coordinator. He is a very humble man. That impressed me.

I later spoke with my son's support coordinator and she knew Carlos. She told me is a very good man. She said he treats everyone at work with respect. She said he even goes through the office each day to say good morning to those who work there.

So as you can see, Carlos not only cares about the people who are being served... he cares about the people who work for him who are serving the families. I have always loved the quote by Ben Franklin that says, "I will act as though what I do makes a difference." I know that because Carlos cares about his job and cares about his staff, he is a good man. But because he truly cares about those who are being served, our world is a better place. He is a true role model and example of one who knows how to serve his fellowman.

Thank you for considering Carlos Gomez to be your 2014 Outstanding DDD Manager of the Year.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gina Johnson".

Gina Johnson
Executive Director/Founder
Sharing Down Syndrome Arizona