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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 26, 2018

ANCOR Names Leroy Bryant 2018 Direct Support Professional of the Year
New Mexico DSP is honored for work in support of community living for people with disabilities

Alexandria, VA. — The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) announced today that Leroy Bryant of Gallop, New Mexico, is the recipient of the 2018 National Direct Support Professional Recognition Award, which is underwritten by Relias Learning.

ANCOR will present the award to Bryant at a ceremony honoring Direct Support Professionals (DSP) from across the nation on April 17 at ANCOR's 2018 Conference: *Converge in the Big Easy* in New Orleans, LA in front of an anticipated audience of over 500 attendees.

Since 2007, ANCOR has honored exceptional Direct Support Professionals with the Direct Support Professional Recognition Award for exemplary work in furthering community inclusion and full participation for the many Americans living with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities. Mr. Bryant was the standout of this year's field of 336 nominees. ANCOR also named state recipients of the DSP Recognition Award in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Moldova and for inaugural categories for setting stellar examples of work in the areas of Advocacy, Relationships, Leadership, Innovation and Tenets of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals.

Bryant is a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at Dungarvin in Gallup, NM. Leroy helps transform lives, but he will quickly tell you that the people he has supported and is supporting have transformed his life. "These people I have supported through the years and the ones today, they are all responsible for bringing me out of my low self-esteem days and helping me become who I am today," he said. "My co-workers too. We're all family here."

Bryant ensures the people he supports are able to rebuild and maintain tribal connections that they had lost over many years of institutional care. The people he supports are Native Americans, three Navajo and one Zuni and now live in the community. As a Navajo himself, he makes certain that they remain connected to their families, their cultures and their traditions.

"Leroy has assisted one man he supports receive blessings by traditional healers at the request of his family," Bernadine Leekela, Dungarvin's Executive Director in Gallup says. "He works cooperatively with team members to assure that they are able to experience a range of traditional cultural events, like native festivals, Pow-Wows, feasts and dances. He's there with them."

Bernadine went on to say: "He's very humble and does not like to talk about himself. You can really see how much he cares about the individuals and to him they are just like his family. It does not matter to him that they have disabilities. His focus is making their lives richer and fuller. He's happy and upbeat and that works well in the home."

“Reading about the work these exceptional DSPs as they support people with disabilities in living full lives is always inspiring,” said Barbara Merrill, ANCOR CEO. “This year’s recipients are truly exemplary examples of their profession, but we know that there are many like them across the country, oftentimes working quietly and without recognition, whose compassion and dedication to their hard work deserves gratitude and appreciation.”

“One of ANCOR’s strategic goals is to obtain the resources necessary to attract and retain professionals like Mr. Bryant and this year’s state and category award recipients,” continued Merrill. “We must continue to remind our policy makers that a stable and qualified workforce forms the backbone of quality services to support people with disabilities – these professionals must be valued for what they do.”

ANCOR’s Direct Support Professional Recognition Award is given to those who personify the values of ANCOR’s National Advocacy Campaign. Nominees are judged on their success in helping people with disabilities build social networks and engage in substantive community participation and for advocating for the people they serve.

2018 Direct Support Professional Award Recipients

STATE		
Alabama	Steve Bishop	Resources for Independence
Alaska	Tammy Porter	ResCare
Arizona	Robert Ruskowski	The MENTOR Network
Arkansas	Edward "Allen" Lowry	Bost, Inc.
California	Alicia Wallace	Dungarvin
Colorado	Katrina Vincent	Continuum of Colorado
Connecticut	Leoncio Guerrero	Ability Beyond
Delaware	Adeyemi Kehinde	Mosaic
District of Columbia	Steve Holley	National Children’s Center
Florida	Catrina Cleveland	ResCare
Georgia	Shanta Luster	Sunrise Community of Georgia, Inc.
Idaho	Elsa Gleason	ResCare
Illinois	Brenda Smith	Marcfirst
Indiana	Jennifer Dailey	Dungarvin
Iowa	Shannon Henson	Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI)
Kansas	Sumer Whitaker	Mosaic
Kentucky	Jamar "Barkim" Gowins	ResCare
Louisiana	Miya Winfield	ResCare
Maine	Danita "Dani" McKenney-Hallett	OHI
Maryland	Euricka Stevens	Progress Unlimited.org
Massachusetts	Jesse Farren-James	WCI
Michigan	Sue Beythan	Bethesda
Minnesota	Elizabeth Lobb	Dungarvin
Missouri	Joni Resides	St. Louis Arc
Montana	Beth Sagato	Opportunity Resources, Inc.
Nebraska	Carrie Diamond	ResCare
Nevada	Maxine Hensley	Dungarvin
New Hampshire	Kalpalata (Lata) Subedi	The PLUS Company
New Jersey	Stephanie Burnham	Dungarvin

New Mexico	Terilyn Barton	Dungarvin
New York	Luis Rosario	Liberty
North Carolina	Robert Moulton	ResCare
North Dakota	Marty Shaw	The MENTOR Network
Ohio	Mina Nardi	Koinonia Homes
Oklahoma	Teri Arquilla	Dungarvin
Oregon	Lucy Garadwey	The MENTOR Network
Pennsylvania	Karen Cogar	Fayette Resources
Rhode Island	Sonja Barr	West Bay Residential Services
South Carolina	Verniell Hannibal	Darlington County DSN Board
South Dakota	Kristen Jung	Aspire, Inc.
Tennessee	Terry Miller	Core Services of Northeast Tennessee
Texas	Deneen Lewis	Volunteers of America Texas
Utah	Kristie Geertsen	RISE Services, Inc.
Vermont	Pete Cook	GMSS
Virginia	Shanta Williams	Resources for Independence of Virginia
Washington	Shiloh Deede	ResCare
West Virginia	Lou Perkins	The MENTOR Network
Wisconsin	Dori Young	Volunteers of America of Minnesota and Wisconsin
SPECIAL CATEGORIES		
Advocacy	Beth Ryan	Living Well Disability Services
Advocacy	Aisha Stanley	Dungarvin
Leadership	Donna Price	Volunteers of America Southeast
Leadership	Kieth Richardson	ResCare
Innovation	Adam Hartwell	New England Business Associates
Innovation	Whitney Newton	RISE Services
NADSP Tenets	Jeffery Pagel	Innovative Services, Inc.
NADSP Tenets	Steve Holley	National Children's Center
Relationships	Emily Ward	ResCare
Relationships	Janet Johnson	The MENTOR Network
INTERNATIONAL		
Canada	Greg Curry	ResCare
Moldova	Natalia Dediu	Keystone

Profiles of the recipients will soon be available on the National Advocacy Campaign website: <http://www.nationaladvocacycampaign.org>.

About ANCOR. The American Network of Community Options and Resources is a national trade association representing more than 1,400 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to over a million individuals with disabilities with a workforce that's half a million strong. ANCOR advocates for the crucial role private providers play in enhancing and supporting the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Through its National Advocacy Campaign, ANCOR seeks to obtain the resources to recruit, train and retain a sustainable direct support workforce. ANCOR provides organization, professional, leadership development and networking opportunities and services and is continually working toward partnerships and collaborations that support our mission, which is to advance the ability of our

members in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in their communities. www.ancor.org.