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Lifeworks Announces Employment Services Awards

WESTWOOD, Mass. (Nov. 19, 2020) – [Lifeworks](#), a nonprofit human services provider that supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), today announced the winners of its Employment Services awards. The “Fall Harvest” awards recognize individuals served by Lifeworks who have gone above and beyond at their jobs in the community.

Lifeworks’ Employment Services Program provides ongoing job training and placement services to adults living with IDD, such as autism. Lifeworks partners with many Greater Boston employers, along with local and statewide workforce initiatives for the disability community. Over the past 30 years, Lifeworks has placed hundreds of talented, dependable individuals in food, customer service, manufacturing, fulfillment, warehouse, retail and office support positions.

Every year, program participants put their skills and work ethic to the test at employers across the region. Those providing exceptional service in their roles are then nominated for an award. Because of COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, and in lieu of the traditional June banquet, this year’s awards ceremony was a hybrid event held Nov. 6, with some individuals honored in person and others via video conference.

“We are extremely proud of every individual in Lifeworks Employment Services, all of whom cherish the opportunity to put their skills and passion to work,” said Daniel Burke, CEO of Lifeworks. “These awardees represent just a fraction of the reliable, competent, efficient employees who have participated in this program. We congratulate them on their accomplishments.”

This year’s **Anthony & Claire Calderone Award** winner, Lossie Batts, a front-end bagger at Roche Bros., has achieved great success and improvement during the past year in her career. Lossie is a pleasant and dedicated employee who has worked for several employers over many years and advocated to return to work during the early stages of the pandemic. This award is given in honor of the late Anthony Calderone and his wife Claire. Anthony was the former longtime comptroller of Lifeworks and both Anthony and Claire were great friends and

supporters of the organization. Lossie's name will be placed on a permanent plaque at the Lifeworks Administrative Offices in Westwood.

Lifeworks also honored the following individuals from its two program sites, Boston and Norwood:

- **Dependable Employee Award** – Jeremy Jordan (Norwood) and Michael Smith (Boston) have proven to be extremely reliable workers, who enthusiastically do their part to be on the job for each shift. Jeremy possess every characteristic of a wonderful employee who is a quick learner and willing to do what is needed to get the job done. Michael is beyond reliable and shows motivation and dedication to do a good job.

Lifeworks also honored Nick Topalis posthumously. Nick was a dedicated employee whose competitive nature led him to always want to be the best at his work and win a Lifeworks Employment Services award.

- **Customer Service Award** – Geoff Blowers (Norwood) and Shae Murray (Boston) continued to work their competitive jobs throughout the pandemic, despite the risk to their own health. They both take the responsibilities of their jobs very seriously.
- **Volunteer Award** – Paul Findlen (Norwood) and Phillip O'Donnell, III (Boston) consistently participate in volunteer opportunities through the Life Enhancement Program, which offers meaningful activities to support employment goals. Paul has a positive and unwavering commitment to helping others. Phillip actively volunteers his time with Meals on Wheels and is always eager to help deliver food to others.
- **Individual Employment Award** – Shirley Brissette (Norwood), who works at both Wegmans and Republic Plumping, and Katie Waters (Boston), who has worked at Roche Bros. for over 20 years, have achieved great success working directly for their employers. Shirley is a determined worker who never gives up and was an incredible advocate for herself, even earning a promotion to cashier. Katie is a positive person who has earned a great deal of respect from her work supervisors and the staff at Lifeworks.

In addition to the traditional awards listed above, Lifeworks created a special group of "Zoom Awards" that recognize the participation of individuals in virtual programs created during the pandemic. Lifeworks honored the following individuals:

- **Pop Culture Award** – Erin Kiely (Norwood) and Kerriann Brown (Boston) are eager to learn new things and are great at trivia games on Zoom.
- **Ray of Sunshine Award** – Mike McCarthy (Norwood) and Ahiesha Vernon (Boston) have continually lifted others' spirits through this challenging time. They were often making people laugh while keeping things positive and encouraging others.
- **Carpe Diem Award** – Cyrus Sethna (Norwood) and Kevin O'Donnell (Boston) have excellent Zoom attendance and actively participated in lessons and activities.

- **Sunflower Award** – Brian Santos (Norwood) and Sok Mel (Boston) have shown exceptional social growth while participating on Zoom.
- **Master Chef Award** – Kate Sally (Norwood) and Oberon Brown (Boston) show enthusiasm for cooking and demonstrated mastery by following the recipe and producing spectacular end products.
- **Picasso Award** – Stephanie Homolko (Norwood) and Marc Harold Jean (Boston) demonstrated excellent artistic abilities, creative spirit and great effort.
- **Gold Medalist Award** – Elizabeth Zamudio (Norwood) and Christopher Cabrero (Boston) understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and actively participated in exercise opportunities.
- **Master Maestro** – Melissa Bassis (Norwood) and Shazam Mohammed (Boston) are knowledgeable and passionate about music.

About Lifeworks

Since 1954, [Lifeworks](#) and its predecessors, Lifeworks Inc. and The Arc of South Norfolk, have served the towns of Norfolk County and beyond by providing support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through collaboration, advocacy and empowerment. The Westwood-based nonprofit organization serves more than 2,300 individuals from more than 14 communities in the Greater Boston, Norfolk County and Attleboro areas through a wide variety of services and programs, including employment services, and residential, education, and day habilitation programs. For more information, visit www.lifeworksarc.org.

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