

At Liberty ARC the Keyword is 'Listen'



“Listen to people – just listen,” is the biggest piece of advice Andy Stegeland, Liberty ARC’s Quality Assurance Coordinator, can give to new employees.

“In the 33 years that I’ve been working here that’s the most valuable advice I can give anyone starting out,” Andy said. “Once you start listening to the people you support and the people you work with then good things happen.”

Andy started at Liberty ARC as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) in 1986.

He thought he’d be at the agency briefly but his job turned into a fulfilling career.

Aside from meeting the individuals he helped support, Andy’s favorite aspect when he began working as a DSP was the freedom the job offered.

“There was freedom within your job responsibilities and you could put your own personal spin on things,” he said.

Andy went from a residential DSP, to a live-in DSP in Palatine Bridge, then he took a position in the Supportive Apartment Program, and later transferred to be a Family Care Liaison. Finally, he took the position of Quality Assurance Coordinator which he’s been doing for the last 10 years.

Andy said he was happy when Liberty ARC aligned with the Council on Quality and Leadership’s (CQL) philosophy because it matched his own.

“It’s all about people living their lives how they want to,” he said. “They get to steer their own ships; it’s not about me telling someone what’s best for them, it’s that person telling me what’s best for them.”

Liberty ARC and the agency’s subsidiary, Choices for Community Living Delaware, Inc., received Accreditation with Distinction from CQL, which is their highest level of Accreditation.

Andy’s favorite aspect of his current position is getting to know the individuals the agency provides supports to and knowing that they’re happy.

“Through CQL’s philosophy and the personal outcome measures system, I can get a quality measurement for the individuals here at the agency,” he said. “I get to find out if they’re happy and if there are things we can improve on.”

Andy said the biggest part of his job is asking questions and listening to the answers.

“Just asking a simple question can impact a life completely,” he said.

Andy recalled a situation in which an individual in Delaware at CCL told him that she was nervous to go in her room. He asked her why, and eventually she told him it was because she heard gun shots whenever she was in there. Andy and the CCL staff quickly figured out that there was a shooting range nearby. To help calm her fears, Andy and staff took this individual to the range to show her that there was nothing to worry about and as a result she was no longer nervous to be in her room.

“That’s why I like what I do – I ask questions and I figure out a way to make things better,” he said. “To have any sort of impact on someone’s life is a fulfilling feeling – and I’ve gotten the joy of that fulfillment for 33 years.”