

## Liberty ARC – Where Inspiration Happens



Associate Director Wendi Kirk loves what she does at Liberty ARC and it shows! During her 20 years working at the agency and all of the different roles she's had during that time, there's one particular moment that's solidified why she continues to do what she does.

"I was assisting with the partnership between FMCC and Liberty ARC," she said, "and at that time, I was taking individuals to their classes at the

college. They were nervous about going but it was important to them. They all passed their classes and did well and it was very meaningful to them. Watching them succeed in school encouraged me to go after my dream of going to school too."

Soon after, Wendi enrolled at Herkimer County Community College and took classes for a Human Services Degree. She has three more classes to complete, which she intends to do in the fall.

"They helped me step outside of my comfort zone," she said. "I thought to myself, 'if they're brave enough to go to school then so am I.'"

Wendi began as a relief direct support professional (DSP) in 1999.

"I needed a job, Liberty ARC was hiring, so I took the position," she said. "I didn't know I'd fall in love with the position. Twenty years later and I'm still here, still loving my job."

Wendi's worked in many different positions during her time at the agency; from a fulltime DSP, to a residential manager, to a day hab coordinator to her current position as an associate director.

"I've worked in all capacities to get to this position and each position has helped shape me in every way," she said. "And I've loved every position I've had because I've always gotten to interact with the individuals. Seeing them smile, getting them through obstacles and helping them achieve their goals are my favorite aspects of working at Liberty ARC."

Wendi enjoys her new role as an associate director because she can be involved in both residential and day programs, and she can “help make both departments work cohesively together to support each other.”

Wendi advises new employees to treat their position as something more than just punching a clock.

“Being a DSP isn’t just a job, it’s a career – there’s always room for advancement at this agency – so treat your position seriously,” she said. “But on the other hand, have fun with it too; there’s no other job out there where you can have fun and enrich the lives of the people you support at the same time.”