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Immediate News Release

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## **Chemung ARC honored by NYSARC for Self-advocate of the Year, Direct Support Professional of the Year AND excellence in newsletter writing**

**Elmira, NY** – It was a banner year for Chemung ARC at this NYSARC, Inc.'s. annual meeting held in Albany. Sharing the spotlight, the agency was beaming with pride for award winners Davida Moss (Direct Support Professional of the Year), Becky Ellsworth (Self-Advocate of the Year) and Allison Monnell (First Place Article, The Quill Awards for excellence in newsletter writing).

Chemung ARC Direct Support Professional, Davida Moss was recognized for the Thomas A. Maul DSP Excellence Award. The award recognizes direct support professionals that have demonstrated an exemplary level of performance and have consistently demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. Chemung ARC Executive Director Mike Doherty spoke about Davida's commitment to all the roles she holds: mom, wife, student and dedicated direct support professional. Upon accepting the award, Davida remarked that the greatest award for her was seeing the accomplishments the ladies at the home where she works achieve on a daily basis. Tom Maul, the award's namesake and former commissioner to the State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), was present for the awards ceremony and gave Davida a big hug on the dais. Davida was quite humbled by the honor and stated, "My passion for what I do is driven by my compassion of working for such wonderful and inspiring women. They are my extended family, lift my spirits when I am down and are grateful in return when I can impart my wisdom and life experiences. It is an honor to be recognized, but the only award I need is seeing these women grow and become all that they can be." Along with the recognition, Davida received a monetary award of \$3000.

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A cocktail reception was held in honor of Becky Ellsworth, Self-Advocate of the Year where attendees had the opportunity to meet and congratulate Becky, who was escorted by her parents, Bob and Monica and her boyfriend, Smokey. The highlight for Becky was meeting OPWDD's newest commissioner, Courtney Burke.

During the awards portion of the evening, a slide show featuring Becky at work at Bethany Village and her civic work with the Aktion Club was shown. Chemung ARC Board President Richard Sisson introduced Becky to the podium and spoke of her plethora of volunteer activities and his experience of sitting on the Board alongside Becky. Becky accepted her award gracefully yet became overcome with emotion during her acceptance speech. True to form and exemplifying all that make up a gracious and caring direct support professional, Davida Moss swiftly climbed up to the dais and encouraged Becky to continue her speech, all the while stating, "you can do it!" Becky finished her speech, and together, she and Davida were met with a standing ovation. Upon receipt of the award Becky commented, "I am honored to have been selected. This honor will be a great reminder that being a self-advocate and sharing my voice can make a difference." It was a wonderful display of heartfelt camaraderie and devotion. Audible sniffles could be heard throughout the banquet room.

The Quill Award, an award that recognizes excellence in newsletter writing, was given to Chemung ARC's Community Relations Director, Allison Monnell for Best Article for her submission of "One to One with Becky Ellsworth" an interview with Becky Ellsworth on her reflections of serving on Chemung ARC's board of directors. Allison stated, "I was overjoyed that an article featuring the State's Self-Advocate of the Year ran away with first place. It was wonderful to have this full circle of excellence --- Davida winning DSP of the Year, Becky, Self-Advocate, both from our Hoffman Street residence, and then this witty interview by Becky taking the first place prize for best article, it was quite an emotional turn of events," exclaimed Allison.

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Pictured L to R:

OPWDD Commissioner Courtney Burke, NYSARC Executive Director Marc Brandt and Self-Advocate of the Year Becky Ellsworth



Pictured: DSP of the Year Davida Moss