**ARRM Cares Nomination: Nakia Hammond *Newport House
Years of Service: 15***

***Professional Integrity:*** Explain how the individual has supported persons served while maintaining high standards to benefit persons served, co-workers, and the organization

The home Nakia works at had a manager turnover recently. The former Program Manager stated that Nakia was her right hand in the home. When the home was without a manager for a period of time, Nakia assured that medications, supplies, and groceries were all ordered, that employee schedules flowed, and that family members received routine updates.

Our organization provides support to individuals with very fragile medical needs, but Nakia is extremely reliable when working side-by-side with our Nursing team. She accompanies individuals to their medical appointments and relays detailed information back to the nursing team, family members, guardians, and coworkers. Family members are always looking to Nakia for recommendations, updates, and feedback.

Throughout COVID, Nakia was a champion of infection control, assuring all COVID protocols were implemented, and most of all, helping the individuals at the home feel some sense of normalcy when they needed to stay home from work, isolate, or limit interactions in the community.

Nakia has also been willing to share her talents with other homes. She recently initiated additional training to work at another home within our organization. Nakia has been and continues to be one of our brightest shining stars!

***Networking Supports:*** Explain how the individual has advocated to connect persons served with natural support systems. Explain techniques the DSP has used to connect persons served with natural supports

Nakia supports everyone’s relationships, but several recent examples illustrate her compassion in this area. W's mother passed away years ago, but Nakia continues helping W purchase flowers to bring to the cemetery where her mother is buried. Given that W lived with her mother for years, maintaining this memory of her mother is extremely important to W.

Nakia also helps another individual maintain his relationship with his mother who lives out of state. "A" loves McDonalds and would share this treat with his mother when she lived in Minnesota. Now, they continue meeting on FaceTime with Nakia’s help. These moments help A see his mom's face, hear her voice, and "share" his McDonalds with her. He can't verbally express his happiness, but it’s noticeable how important these times are—not only to A, but to Mom as well!

Finally, "T" has been through some challenging health issues related to swallowing and potential aspiration—prompting a change in her feeding method. This is life changing for T and has been a difficult decision for her and her mother. Nakia has been in frequent contact with T's mother, our Nursing team, and our dietician. She has provided emotional support throughout this process.

***Creative, Innovative, Person-Centered Approaches to Services:*** Explain how the individual has personalized services for persons served and how they have demonstrated an ability to develop and implement new person-centered approaches while demonstrating successful results.

Encouraging. Advocate. Supportive. Friend. Calming. Welcoming. These are just a few of the words to describe the incredible gift Nakia Hammond is to us and the people we support.

When "W" moved into her home 5.5 years ago, she weighed over 300lbs, was using continuous oxygen, and got tired easily walking from her bedroom to the living room. She wanted to lose weight but struggled with how to achieve that goal. Nakia slowly worked with W to make lifestyle changes. Snacks became healthy, exercise started with walks to the mailbox that eventually turned into neighborhood walks, and restaurant trips became trips to Subway. For W, it was about the experience, and Nakia always made it fun!

Several years ago, W was experiencing a mental health crisis that required hospitalization. Her ability to return to her home was in question. Nakia worked with W to manage her mental health with the things she loves, such as her crossword puzzles, art, and her favorite TV show.

Today, W credits Nakia for helping her manage her mental health. W states, "When I get hyper, Nakia helps me calm down!" Nakia continues to use these strategies proactively when she recognizes W needs the help.