



## **HEART & SOUL**

### ***How Direct Support Professionals Are the Brick-and-Mortar Infrastructure to 160,000 Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities***

As we enter the week of September 9th, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible contributions of the 110,000 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) across New York State. These individuals are the heart and soul of the support system for the 160,000 New Yorkers with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Their tireless work ensures that those they care for can lead fulfilling, independent lives while realizing their goals and dreams.

At Lifespire, since our founding, we have witnessed firsthand the dedication and passion DSPs bring to their roles. They are more than caregivers—they are advocates, mentors, and friends. Every day, they build meaningful relationships with individuals and their families, creating a foundation of trust that supports personal growth and inclusion.

However, despite their invaluable role, DSPs remain severely undercompensated. Currently, this multi-talented workforce is underpaid by 30-40%, a disparity that must be addressed. Lifespire stands in solidarity with these professionals, advocating for fair wages that reflect their expertise, commitment, and the life-changing impact they have on the I/DD community.

This week, we celebrate DSPs and their unwavering dedication. They are the true brick and mortar of the services we provide, and their work embodies the spirit of Lifespire's mission: to offer limitless life possibilities to those we serve.

— Tom Lydon  
CEO, Lifespire, Inc.