

MAB Community Services recognizes Douglas Resident Stefani Kennedy September 2024

MAB Community Services, a leading social service agency supporting nearly 2,000 people with visual impairment, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and acquired brain injuries across Massachusetts, has announced the 11 honorees of the 2024 Maxo Joseph Excellence in Direct Care Awards, who each received \$2,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000 awards. Douglas resident Stefani Kennedy, an employment specialist serving Central MA clients with disabilities, received a \$10,000 award.



Stefani Kennedy

Two anonymous donors recently contributed a total of \$110,000 to support the continuation of this unique awards program. Established in 2021, the Maxo Joseph Awards recognize direct care staff in MAB's Adult Disability Services division who go above and beyond in their commitment to the participants they support. This year, 46 award nominees reflected the life and legacy of Maxo Joseph, an exceptional caregiver and beloved colleague who served MAB for nearly 20 years and passed away in 2020.

For Stefani, this is more than just a job. She is mission driven. Some of her clients get jobs right away. Others take months of hard work. Stefani helps them get the jobs they want with

any accommodation they need, which encourages them to believe in themselves and their futures. Current client placements include

CVS, Lowe's, and a public library. Stefani joins some clients at their workplaces and provides less support as they learn to do things more independently. One of Stefani's clients, who nominated her for a Maxo Joseph Award, is grateful that his job enables him to buy Christmas presents for his son.

The number of years that the 2024 Maxo Joseph Award winners have dedicated to MAB ranges from one

to 20, with an average of more than six years. Honorees are chosen by a committee consisting of MAB staff, community supporters, and family members of the participants the nominees serve.

"It's a pleasure to recognize and reward our hardworking direct care staff through the fourth annual Maxo Joseph Awards," said Barbara Salisbury, CEO of MAB Community Services. "In the last few years, MAB has increasingly focused on giving participants the skills they need to become more independent. Our staff and programs are helping participants achieve goals that wouldn't have been possible before. I'm very proud of what they are accomplishing."