



**DOREEN CULLEN  
AWARD**

*Annually honoring Mary Centre staff for exceptional effort and dedication to improving the lives of individuals with a developmental disability.*

**Nomination for Doreen Cullen Award 2018– Charmaine Gouveia (community support, Peel)**

I would like to nominate Charmaine Gouveia, Community Support Peel, for the Doreen Cullen Award in 2018. Charmaine has dedicated over a decade to working with individuals in various programs across Mary Centre. As her supervisor I have seen her go far above and beyond for her clients again and again. I have personally seen what amazing influence her strength and perseverance in the face of crisis and tragedy, her honest care and respect of those she supports, and her dedication to advocating for people with developmental disabilities has on those she supports and their families. Charmaine takes no nonsense and is quick to speak her mind when it comes to advocating for the best support for her clients even when she knows not all will agree. Along with all this Charmaine is always willing to work as a team and with her supervisor to take advice and help create the best supports possible.

In particular I would like to mention her care of two clients whom Charmaine has supported over the past number of years.

One gentleman came to Mary Centre many years ago. At that time this man was virtually estranged from his family and presented difficult behaviours that a number of other staff were not able to handle. Charmaine however developed a strong trusting relationship with this client over time, and eventually helped him to reunite with his family by slowly adjusting his understanding of his destructive behaviour and negative thought patterns. After a few years this man was flourishing and enjoying a great relationship with his family again. As he was blind Charmaine would cook with him and often brought him meals she had prepared at home so that he wouldn't need to eat frozen food. During times when he needed additional support around applying medication she would go on her time off and on the weekends to ensure that he was getting the support he needed. A year or so ago Charmaine was the one to notice a decline in his health which led to a terminal diagnosis of cancer. During this period Charmaine continued to do far more than was required of her, assisting him with medical appointments, advocating on his behalf for faster and better care, and helping him navigate his own emotions during this difficult time. While he transitioned into LTC she continued supporting him, and even when he was transferred to another worker's caseload in the LTC program she continued to keep in touch and visit him on the weekends for many months until his recent passing. This individual's family has stated unequivocally that Charmaine's support to this client and his family was beyond compare, and that it has even led them to make a generous donation to Mary Centre on behalf of this client.

The support Charmaine has given to the second client I would like to mention has been no different. Soon after starting to work with this individual, this client's mother passed away which was an extremely traumatic experience. Along with teaching many skills to ensure this individual could remain living independently in her home, Charmaine helped her deal with a decades-long hoarding addiction with lasting success. Through patience, understanding and developing trust, Charmaine was a huge help to the client and her family, something I as her supervisor continue to hear repeatedly from the client and family themselves. Again Charmaine was the one to identify changes in the client's health and supported her in dealing with many doctors and specialists, vague and changing diagnoses, and all of the emotional stress that came with this. She ensured that the family became involved as needed and was often the person that the family looked to the most in helping them navigate this situation as well. Charmaine was the person the family called when someone discovered the individual in the midst of a mental breakdown. The individual was in hospital for a number of months where Charmaine continued



her support. During this time not only the family but even the hospital staff looked to her to support them in handling the individual's new and often very difficult behaviours. Charmaine was the one who often coordinated meetings and medical appointments as her knowledge of what had been going on during the last few months was deeper than even the family's. This is yet another family who have been very vocal about the outstanding work they have seen from Charmaine and have gone to their own measures to increase her support and make sure that she stays in the picture, even after the individual is moved out of hospital and into residential care.

These are only two examples but there are many more. I would like to nominate Charmaine Gouveia for the Doreen Cullen Award based on her incredible dedication to her clients, her strength in the face of difficult circumstances, and for the positive energy that she lends to every situation she enters. She is a true example of what a Mary Centre support staff should strive to be.

-Christine Marwan (Integrated Seniors Coordinator)

