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NMDVR State Rehabilitation Council selects recipients of 2021 SRC awards

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2021 NMDVR SRC awards.

The NMDVR SRC is composed of members representing a broad range of disabilities and organizations interested in helping New Mexicans with disabilities secure gainful employment. Every year, the SRC honors two employees of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and one employer for outstanding performance in helping individuals with disabilities achieve their employment goals.

“The SRC is very proud of the recipients of this year’s awards,” said Tracy Agiovlasitis, NMDVR SRC Membership, Training & Awards Committee chairperson and program manager with the NM Technology Assistance Program. “This year presented unique challenges to all NMDVR staffers and all New Mexicans with disabilities. All staff at NMDVR worked hard to adjust during the pandemic. The NMDVR SRC Awards Committee was very impressed with the details describing how this year’s awardees— two employees and one employer—went above and beyond toward employing people with disabilities despite pandemic restrictions.”

The 2021 SRC Award recipients are:

- **Kayla Damron, vocational rehabilitation counselor, Area IV - Clovis**
“Kayla has one of the largest caseloads in the state and goes above and beyond to ensure program participants become successfully employed. She is never too busy to mentor and assist support staff and area counselors. Due to new regulations, she attends meetings in schools for those counselor’s participants in the eastern portion of the state. Her kindness, knowledge and longevity with NM DVR has made her the area “go-to” person, lending to increased productivity and morale for all.”
- **Patricia Sainz, vocational rehabilitation technician, Area VIII - Gibson**
“Patricia has managed billing and monthly reports for five counselor caseloads during staff shortages. She provided excellent professional communication to program participants, counselors supervisors and vendors. Participants noted that she was always kind and courteous. Patricia’s commitment to the NM DVR mission was evident in the remote work, new and challenging technology and changing needs for counselors, financial and

management staff. Her excellent service shows that all staff are vital to assisting persons with disabilities achieve their employment goals.”

- **Santa Fe National Forest Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District**
“Over the course of a long-term relationship with the NM DVR Las Vegas staff, Manager Michael Lujan and his staff have surpassed expectations to ensure that people with disabilities can excel and reach their career goals within the US Forestry Department. They provide unique learning opportunities [for NMDVR participants] and many individuals are hired on permanently. This office is a great example of how hiring people with disabilities enhances operations.”

Award nominations are submitted by peers and supervisors and must demonstrate outstanding performance or outcomes related to one or more of the following criteria:

- Creating unique and exciting partnerships with community providers and/or community services.
- Empowering individuals with disabilities to live independently and/or becoming effective self-advocates.
- Committed to providing unique successful inclusion plans, job descriptions and/or job accommodations.
- Educating and/or increasing community awareness of NMDVR regarding the benefit to individuals with disabilities seeking employment.

About the NMDVR SRC

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviews, analyzes, and advises the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding all rehabilitation programs and policies administered by NMDVR under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Tasked with partnering with the NMDVR to ensure the highest quality services are made available to those seeking support services, the SRC acts as the external, community-oriented voice in the consideration and development of NMDVR policy.

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