



### ***Spotlight on Staff***

## **RAIMONDA BESHI**

### **Longest Serving Employment DSP**

You can call her "Mo;" "Mona;" or "Mona Lisa." Or you can call her "Rai" or "Ray." But she is Raimonda Beshi, who at 14 years has worked in Employment Services longer than anyone.

A native of Albania, Raimonda loves the nicknames her crew at Michael's Arts & Crafts that she supports as a job coach/Direct Service Professional (DSP) has given her. She loves her crew members and they love her.

"People ask me how I can do my job. They say, 'If you paid me \$1,000 a day I couldn't do it,'" Raimonda said. "The thing is, you have to have the heart to work with the guys. If you don't feel it, you can't do it. They're great. They're just like everyone else. I call myself lucky. The team I have now is very independent. They're fun to be around. They're very hard workers. I value all of them in so many ways.

"The patience you have with your family is pretty much the same as what you need to work here," Raimonda added. "We are caregivers, teachers, nurses, shoulders for them to cry on and in some ways, parents. We're with them six hours a day."

She also loves her fellow Favarh employees.

"Everyone here has big hearts. It feels like a family here. Other employees care about you," she said, attributing the family feeling to the leadership of Gail Nebel, director of Employment Services who began working as a job coach herself not long after Raimonda. "She has been in our position. She knows how to read us. It makes you want to come to work."

Raimonda graduated in 1984 from Luigj Gurakugi University, a teacher's college in Elbasan, Albania. She then taught elementary school in Albania, grades one through four, until 1996, when she, her husband Medali, and their three children (then aged 13, 12 and 10) emigrated to the United States. The family became American citizens five years later. Her husband is now head of the math department at Crosby High School in Waterbury as well as a professor at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).

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