



Spotlight on Staff

DARLENE GUTHRIE

WORKED WITH INCARCERATED KIDS

Darlene Guthrie has spent the majority of her career working with incarcerated youth as a staff member of the state Department of Children and Families (DCF). Now she works as a Favarh driver, transporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and finds the change “refreshing.”

A graduate of Western Connecticut State University with a degree in mass communications and a minor in justice and law, Darlene initially had a desire to become a lawyer. But instead she worked at a nonprofit in New York

state similar to Favarh for a year and a half before joining the DCF. She spent 23 years working with what she referred to as “adjudicated youth” - children who have been given a criminal sentence by a judge. She initially worked at the Long Lane School, a correctional facility for girls in Middletown and then the Connecticut Juvenile Training School, a similar facility for boys on the grounds of the Connecticut Valley Hospital, also in Middletown. In total, she worked with delinquent girls for eight years and delinquent boys for 15 years.

Now, she said, she finds it “refreshing to work with” people with IDD. “I still have the tools and skills I developed” while working with incarcerated youth, “but instead of dealing with negative, defiant behavior,” she’s working with people who can just as easily put a smile on her face.

Darlene joined Favarh in July 2016, driving a bus route to and from Barkhamsted. Her route has changed and now her route includes Southington, Terryville and Bristol.

“I never knew these areas before I drove this route,” Darlene said. “Well, I knew them, but I always thought you had to go by I-84 to get there. I didn’t know any of the back roads. Now I do.”

She also worked for nine months as a substitute Direct Support Professional (DSP) at ALEP, Building 2.

“It took me a while to get my head wrapped around the care, but once I got that I actually enjoyed it” at Building 2, Darlene said.

As for driving a large bus instead of a van, she said she was intimidated at first, “but now I love it. I just love the whole interaction” with the people she transports daily. “I just love the whole program.”

A Hartford native, Darlene currently lives in Bloomfield. She is the youngest of five siblings that include two older brothers and two older sisters.

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