



Making a Difference Newsletter

January 2026

One Team! Dawn Marie Beckett, Stephanie Beery, Nicholas Clark, Rosa Gutierrez-Camacho, Sienna King, Jasmine Lopez, Lora Lunt, Jamie Schobert, Jean Haviland, Amy Jackson, Gregory John, Danielle McClendon, Chris Stephens, Trista Hawkins, Christopher Lavenz, Ed Ponce, Mateo Tupac; Joseph Demers, Bruce Ohlrich, Kathy Pozun, Dalten Smith, Sierra Spencer, Katherine Walter, Lynndee Alvarez, Isaiah Kingery, Kaleb Moyer, Jordan Warner, JT Wilson, Curtis Dixon, Holli Hickman, Tony Kellner, Kevin Meija-Escobar, Trevor Sumner, Jesse Berglund-Barba, Noel Cardoza, Aubree Cline, Sarah Crook, Ash Emerald, Ember Gilbert, Melody Graves, Angelina Marie Griffith, Zamara Pierce, Felicia Garland, Ashley Meyers, Gary Winters, Darryl Andy, Derek Ansbro, Matthew Barlow, Alicia Barlow, McKayla Beudry, Dani Boesen, Jayden Brown, Brent Burrell Jr., Michael Church, James Culley, Katy Freelund, Margaret Fyfe, Adrian Gamino, Caleb Gauntz, Memory Hedenquist, Elijah Hollis Williams, Chad Horton, Gavin Jeffs, Ashley Jones, Shannon Kleveland, Akura Latham, Dante Lewis-Henderson, Lawrence McDaniel, Mariana Mergel, Isis Merida, Alexander Midnight, CeAndra Nelson, Jared Orr, Natalie Pruett, Ashley Rodriguez, Evan Ryan, Cherry Savage, Debra Slater, Ronald Spotts, Bill Stanley, Yashveer Singh, Angela Thompson, Joseph Wilson, Roxana Wilson, Mary Brewer, Shannon Collard, Ernest Cox, Merria Baker, Akyra Daniels, Kaleah Melendy, Andrew Netter, Jazmyn Perez, Jennie Rosson, Jeff Stradtman, Stephen Ansbro, Tyler Bridges, Marcel Jones, Skylar Long, Cody McDaniel, Christopher Munson, Tyler Narron, Aayush Singh, Terrance Thompson, Lynette Colley, Anna Layne, Shannon Lilburn, Kyle McCullough, Austin Sanders, Justin Ward, Ariel Belmontes, Jessica Dean, Jessica Harvey, Alissa Holcomb, Judy Longee, Angelina McGinty, Christina Pruett, Amber Shore, Jami-Lea Archuleta, Michael Gouley, Holli Hickman, Shari Stevens, Logan Burkett, Randy Cox, Jordan Dell, Michelle Jalaty, Tara McKnight, Alisha Page, Jacob Skinner, Daniel Woodruff, Aidan Christian-Wayne, Matthew Demers, Kermit Gaston, Lucas Lindsay, Painter Mac-Gorrindo, Chase McIntyre, Jamison Ross, Devin Talley, Adam Barber, Theresa Collins, Kelsie Dewater, LouAnn Dewater, Melissa Fraser, Melissa Gaston, Jason Grabinger, Lisa Grissom, Stacy Hall, Karen Jacobsen, Diane Johnson, DeDe Lofthouse, Stacy Medina, Danny Stoddard, Michael Stoddard, Shamy Turner, Kathleen Upchurch, Julie Wadkins, Paul Baldwin, Joshua Crowell, Rey Martinez, Stevon Upchurch, Sheila Banks, Kimberly Brick, Dominic Jurado, Terry Edwards, Patricia Johnson, Doug Veysey, Donna Wood, and Francine Worthen.

We're all Making a Difference!

"Making a Difference" forms can be submitted anytime and all submissions are entered in a monthly drawing!

Star of Hope Employee Celebration Award Winners

Each year, our teammates nominate one another to recognize excellence demonstrated throughout the previous year. Award recipients were announced at our annual Employee Celebration, held on January 30, 2026 at the Ko-Kwel Casino Resort. Thank you to everyone who attended, submitted nominations, and supported the event—especially those who worked during the celebration.

Congratulations to all of our award recipients!



Austin Sanders
Acapella Home

Austin is the clear choice for Acapella Home's Employee of the Year Award because his work consistently centers on what matters most: the individuals we serve. Austin is known for stepping up—adjusting schedules, filling in without hesitation, and making sure both individuals and coworkers feel genuinely cared about. His colleagues describe him as someone who always shows up when help is needed, and that reputation is earned daily. In his own words, Austin sees his role as helping people live happy, fulfilling lives and walking alongside them as they achieve goals they set for themselves. That mindset translates directly into action, impact, and joy—making Austin not just an outstanding employee, but a true embodiment of our mission.



Jordan Warner
Applewood Home

Jordan is a standout choice for Applewood Home's Employee of the Year Award because of the consistency, heart, and presence he brings to his work every day. He is deeply engaged in his responsibilities and with the individuals he supports, approaching each task with empathy, attentiveness, and genuine care. He has built strong, trusting relationships with individuals who value his input, enjoy his company, and respond to his ability to lift their spirits. Beyond his reliability and skill, Jordan brings warmth, humor, and positivity wherever he goes. His uplifting energy makes people feel seen and appreciated, and his commitment to quality care is evident in everything he does.



Shamy Turner
Brook Home

Shamara Turner, MSN, RN is a deserving recipient of the Brook Home Employee of the Year Award for the thoughtful, individualized care she provides to those in her care throughout Star of Hope, and especially in her work at the Brook Home. She takes the time to truly know them as people—not just as recipients of care—and approaches every interaction with calm, competence, and compassion. Her nursing practice reflects deep respect for each person's needs, strengths, and lived experience, building trust with residents and confidence among staff. Shamy views this work as a privilege, and her continued commitment to expanding her knowledge in disability services strengthens the quality of care at Brook Home.



Tony Kellner
Cammann Home

Tony is a highly deserving Employee of the Year for his consistency, reliability, and steady commitment to the individuals he supports. As a long-term staff member, Tony can be counted on to follow direction, remain open to learning, and show up each shift with a strong sense of responsibility. He genuinely cares about the people served and is a dependable, supportive teammate—always willing to step in where needed, including proactively helping prepare meals during his graveyard shift. Tony's quiet dedication and reliability make him an essential part of the team and a trusted presence for both residents and coworkers.

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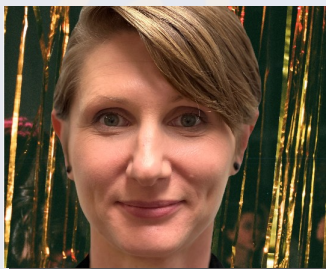
Aayush Singh
Cedar Home

Aayush is a standout and well-deserving recipient of the Cedar Employee of the Year Award. He is genuinely a pleasure to work alongside—bringing a positive presence, eagerness to learn, and the ability to quickly put new skills into practice. He approaches his work with confidence and humility, never hesitating to apply what he has learned in service of the team and the individuals supported. Consistently dependable and collaborative, he represents the very best of what strong teamwork and growth-minded service look like at Cedar.



Jennie Rosson
Compass Circle Home

Jennie is a highly deserving recipient of the Compass Circle Home Employee of the Year Award for her unwavering commitment to the individuals she supports and the team she stands beside. She is consistently there for the clients, ensuring their needs are met with care and attentiveness, while also stepping in whenever coverage is needed to keep the home running smoothly. Jennie's reliability, willingness to cover shifts, and dedication to continuity of support make her a trusted and essential presence at Compass Circle Home. Her actions reflect a deep sense of responsibility and care for both clients and coworkers.



Alisha Page
Driftwood Home

Alisha is a very deserving recipient of the Driftwood Award for her reliability, teamwork, and unwavering dedication to both the people she supports and the colleagues she works alongside. She is knowledgeable, dependable, and always willing to do what is asked—playing a key role in training new staff, supporting coworkers, and ensuring the home remains at the highest standard of care, including during the state licensing review. She consistently ensures residents are well cared for, engaged in meaningful activities, and living in a clean, welcoming home. Her can-do attitude, professionalism, and genuine care create a positive environment where residents feel supported and valued, making her deeply appreciated by managers, coworkers, and residents alike.



Jessica Dean
Edgewood Home

Jessica is a standout team member at Edgewood Home whose dedication, heart, and positive energy make a meaningful difference every day. She is always there for the people in the program and goes out of her way to support and guide new staff, helping them feel confident and capable. Jessica consistently puts residents first, championing meaningful outings and regular community engagement that enrich the lives of the women she supports. With her get-up-and-go attitude, strong follow-through on documentation, and willingness to adjust her schedule when needed, she brings reliability, joy, and stability to Edgewood Home. Her optimism and commitment elevate the entire program.

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McKayla Brooks
Englewood Home

Makayla is a deserving recipient of the Englewood Home Award for her reliability, care, and pride in creating a warm, well-run home environment. As a dedicated graveyard shift staff member, she consistently ensures mornings start smoothly—having lunches prepared, coffee ready, and the home left clean and welcoming. Makayla takes care to ensure the residents look and feel their best, maintains a well-kept household, and brings strong cooking skills that contribute to comfort and routine. Her attention to detail and commitment to creating a pleasant, supportive home make a meaningful difference every day.



Lucas Lindsay
Forest View Home

Lucas is a truly deserving recipient of the Forest View Award for his exceptional generosity and unwavering commitment to Star of Hope's mission. As a Program Manager, he runs a strong, stable home while also serving as a go-to support across the organization—consistently stepping in during crises, mentoring other managers to build confidence and competence, and staying until challenges are fully resolved. Lucas routinely goes beyond his formal role, assisting where needed and all while maintaining focus on the health, safety, and quality of life of the residents he supports.



Ed Ponce
Hayes Home

Ed is a highly deserving recipient of the Hayes Award for his steadfast focus on the residents he supports and his commitment to high-quality care. He consistently keeps the residents at the center of his work, supporting them in living the lives they choose while maintaining a positive, respectful attitude. Ed's deep knowledge of the gentlemen he supports—built over many years—provides invaluable insight that strengthens daily care and decision-making. He also plays a key role in supporting strong the program, helping ensure medication accuracy, thoughtful menu planning, and accountability.



Katie Walter
Maxwell Home

Katie is a well-deserving recipient of the Maxwell Home Award for her strong work ethic, positive attitude, and genuine care for the individuals she supports. She is friendly, approachable, and consistently dependable—showing up with great energy and getting the work done each shift. Katie goes above and beyond to ensure residents' needs are met, whether that means cooking, cleaning, supporting outings, or stepping in to cover shifts to support her coworkers. Rarely missing a day and always bringing a smile, she has become an essential part of the Maxwell Home family. Her dedication, reliability, and heart for the work make her deeply valued by residents and staff alike.

Star of Hope Employee Celebration Award Winners

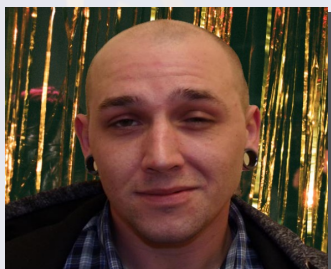
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Ember Gilbert
Virginia Home

Ember is a highly deserving recipient of the Virginia Home Award for her compassion, dedication, and measurable impact on the individuals she supports. She is a known hard worker who connects naturally with residents, building trust through consistency and genuine care. Her one-to-one work has been especially meaningful, resulting in increased confidence and a broader range of community outings. She consistently goes above and beyond to support both residents and her team, bringing reliability, heart, and professionalism to everything she does.



Nicholas Clark
Coos DSA

Nick is a well-deserving recipient of the Coos DSA Award for his initiative, adaptability, and commitment to quality support. He consistently steps in where help is needed—often anticipating needs before they are even identified—and brings a positive, solutions-focused attitude to every situation. Nick has gone above and beyond in client care, quickly building strong, trusting relationships with both clients and coworkers. His willingness to jump in, connect, and contribute meaningfully has made a clear and lasting impact on the Coos DSA program.



Ashley Meyers
Coos SLP

Ashley is a deserving recipient of the Coos CLS/SLP Award for her consistency, professionalism, and reliability. She is punctual and dependable, serving as a strong resource for trainees and a steady presence for the individuals she supports. Ashley delivers high-quality care while maintaining accurate, timely documentation, helping ensure services are both effective and compliant. Her attention to detail and commitment to doing the work well make her an essential part of the CLS/SLP team.



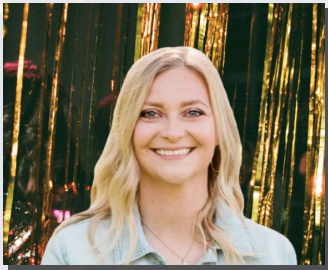
Mary Brewer
Curry CBS

Mary is a highly deserving recipient of the Curry CBS Award for her consistency, compassion, and deep commitment to the individuals she supports. She is always willing to help and brings a genuine heart for her work, providing each person with the encouragement, stability, and respect they deserve. Mary's long-standing knowledge of the residents she serves allows her to support independence while meeting individual needs with care and insight. Her reliability and compassion are a true asset to the team and a meaningful presence in the lives of those she supports.

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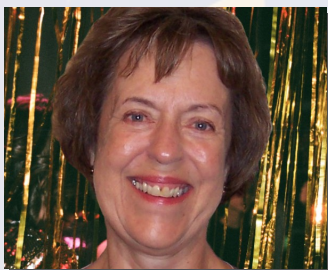
Kelsie Dewater
Administration

Kelsie is an extraordinary presence at Star of Hope, and the strength of our organization is deeply tied to her steady, thoughtful leadership in payroll, benefits, and all Human Resources functions. She approaches her work with care, precision, and a deep sense of responsibility, ensuring that staff feel supported, informed, and valued. In moments of personal illness or crisis, Kelsie shows exceptional compassion—guiding employees through complex paperwork and difficult circumstances with patience, discretion, and genuine concern for their well-being. She provides clear, dependable answers, brings insight to challenging situations, and is trusted across the agency for her sound judgment and integrity. Her commitment extends well beyond her role, as she consistently shows up for client and company events, ready to help wherever needed. Kelsie is profoundly deserving of recognition as Employee of the Year for Administration, and we are truly grateful for the care, stability, and heart she brings to Star of Hope every day.



Captain's Cabin
Community Partner

Captain's Cabin is a highly deserving recipient of the Community Partner of the Year Award for its authentic and sustained commitment to inclusion, belonging, and meaningful community connection. Week after week during DJ Bingo, the individuals we support are welcomed not simply as patrons, but as valued VIPs—greeted with warmth, respect, and genuine kindness by both the owners and staff. The environment they create is one of acceptance and joy, where everyone is treated with dignity and encouraged to fully participate. Captain's Cabin consistently goes beyond basic accommodation, intentionally fostering a space where individuals feel safe, included, and celebrated for who they are. Their partnership reflects a shared belief in opportunity, respect, and the power of community, and their continued support has made a lasting, positive impact on the lives of the people we serve.



Sheila Banks
Board Member

Sheila Banks is honored for her year of service and excellence as a longtime Board Member whose leadership, insight, and steady commitment have strengthened Star of Hope's mission. She brings thoughtful governance, institutional knowledge, and a clear dedication to ensuring the organization remains accountable, resilient, and person-centered. Sheila's contributions reflect both strategic perspective and genuine care for the people served, and her continued service has made a lasting, positive impact on the organization. Her leadership exemplifies the highest standards of board service and stewardship.

Star of Hope Employee Celebration Award Winners

First Annual 'Making a Difference' Award

This year, Star of Hope introduced a new annual honor—the Making a Difference Award—presented alongside the awards we have come to know and value. This award recognizes individuals whose impact extends beyond job duties, honoring those whose consistent, often unseen efforts meaningfully change lives. It elevates work rooted in authentic relationships, presence, and commitment, affirming that true impact is measured in trust built, dignity upheld, and lives strengthened.



Lora Lunt
Making a Difference

Lora Lunt is the inaugural recipient of Star of Hope's Making a Difference Award, a fitting honor as she is also recognized statewide with the 2025 Works of Heart Award from the State of Oregon. For 17 years, Lora has exemplified what it means to be an exceptional Direct Support Professional—supporting individuals with disabilities to live meaningful, self-directed lives through patience, consistency, and deep respect. She turns everyday moments into opportunities for growth, empowerment, and connection, building trusting relationships that foster confidence and independence. Lora's compassion, reliability, and unwavering commitment have left a lasting impact on the individuals she supports, her colleagues, and the broader community. Her work reflects the very heart of Star of Hope's mission and truly embodies what it means to make a difference.

Annual 'All Agency' Award

The All Agency Award is one of the most meaningful honors at Star of Hope, as it reflects the collective voice of staff across the entire organization. Being selected requires more than excellence in one role or program—it signifies an individual whose dedication, leadership, and work ethic are felt agency-wide. To earn the support and votes of colleagues from across departments speaks to the consistency, trust, and respect the recipient has built over time. This award recognizes not only hard work, but the lasting influence one person can have on the culture and success of the whole agency.



Holli Hickman
All Agency

Holli is an exceptionally deserving recipient of the All-Agency Employee of the Year Award, honored for more than 20 years of unwavering dedication, outstanding leadership, and deep commitment to Star of Hope's mission. Her presence sets a standard across the entire agency—she is consistently available, dependable, and fully invested in supporting both staff and the individuals we serve. Under her leadership, the two homes she manages exemplify excellence in care, inclusion, and dignity, reflecting her high expectations and thoughtful oversight. Holli leads with confidence and ownership, meeting complex challenges head-on with creativity, sound judgment, and follow-through that produces real results. She has earned the trust and respect of her teams through fairness, accountability, and steady guidance, creating environments where staff feel supported, empowered, and proud of their work. Her ability to successfully lead multiple programs while uplifting everyone around her with professionalism, compassion, and genuine positivity makes her not only an exceptional leader, but a cornerstone of Star of Hope's culture and success.