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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NADSP RESPONDS TO SHOOTING OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) envisions a world where people with intellectual and other disabilities live community-based lives, supported by a highly qualified direct support workforce with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to support them in directing the course of their own lives.

Each day, direct support professionals assist scores of thousands of people with disabilities across America whose needs and desires are as multiple and varied as is their numbers. Sometimes these people exhibit challenging behaviors and experience emotional distress in community situations. Central to our effort to support safety in the community is a vast direct support workforce whose members have diverse ethnic, racial and educational backgrounds and whose different life experiences shape what they bring to this challenging, yet deeply rewarding job.

Earlier this week Charles Kinsey, a direct support professional who supports people with developmental disabilities in North Miami, Florida was shot by law enforcement officers as he was supporting a man with autism who appeared to be in crisis. While the facts of this case continue to unfold, it is clear that Mr. Kinsey was demonstrating complex skills and values required by direct support professionals who must be able to assess the crisis situation, de-escalate the situation while protecting himself and the person he supports and communicate with others involved in the situation in a clear, consistent manner. By all accounts, as with a vast majority of direct support professionals to do this important work, Mr. Kinsey had built a trusting and respectful relationship with the man he supports to guide him through this crisis. But, tragically, it wasn't enough.

In January 2013, Robert Ethan Saylor, a man with Down Syndrome had gone with a direct support professional to see a movie and refused to leave after the movie had ended, wanting to see it again. The direct support professional warned the off-duty deputies, who were moonlighting as private security guards at the mall where the theater was located, that he would resist if touched by strangers. The situation quickly escalated and Mr. Saylor ended up on the floor, under the three deputies, and suffered a fractured larynx and later died for the cost of a movie ticket.

These cases, and many more like them, reflect the need for advanced training of law enforcement on how to safely and effectively interact with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are in emotional crisis. We believe that direct support professionals and law enforcement, working together, can prevent tragedies like Mr. Saylor's death and Mr. Kinsey's shooting from ever happening again with training, communication and mutual respect.

About the NADSP: In 1996, NADSP's ideological founder, John F. Kennedy Jr. wrote "Quality is defined at the point of interaction between the staff member and the individual with a disability". Given this, NADSP's mission is to enhance the quality of support provided to people with disabilities through the provision of products, services, and certifications which elevate the status of direct support workers, improve practice standards, promote systems reform and, most importantly, advance the knowledge, skills, and values of direct support workers. For more information, please visit www.nadsp.org.