

#bFair 2DirectCare

“Everyone is unique and we celebrate that!”

Kelsie Bongiorno works as a direct support professional at an Upstate Cerebral Palsy children’s residence in Utica. One day, she visited a theme park with one of the children with whom she works. “When I saw the excitement on her face when she was able to go on any ride she wanted, I realized that what I do as a direct support professional really matters,” she said. “I feel as if the people I work with are part of my family and I cherish them and look forward to that interaction each day. I know that I am making a difference in people’s lives and that is extremely rewarding to me.”



“I had just finished high school and was looking for a rewarding job when my mom asked if I thought about applying to Upstate Cerebral Palsy. I figured it would be something to look into since I was starting college to obtain a degree in education. The people I support along with the staff I work with are what keep me here at Upstate Cerebral Palsy.” The biggest challenges of my job are working with different people who have different needs. Some of the people we support require total assistance and some require little to none. Another challenge is understanding each individual we work with and knowing what they like and don’t like. But this is also a fun aspect as well. Everyone is unique and we celebrate that! The greatest reward of my job is seeing people become independent and achieving their goals of going out into the community. I love helping people work on skills such as money management, for example, knowing how much money to give the cashier when purchasing an item.