

BHDDH SPOTLIGHT

JILL MURPHY



There are times when Jill Murphy will hang up the phone and say to herself, “I really didn’t do anything.”

Her colleagues, should they hear of it, are sure to disagree.

Among the social workers in BHDDH’s Division of Developmental Disabilities, Murphy is known as a problem solver who does whatever is needed when people need help, or perhaps, just someone to listen.

“She’s the person that when something comes up and you know it could be problematic, you breathe a sigh of relief,” said Meredith MacDonald, Murphy’s supervisor. “You know she’s going to be right there working with that person and working with you, trying to get to a positive resolution.”

Murphy entered state service 30 years ago this month. She started in the family service unit at the Department of Children, Youth and Families and worked there for 11 years. Then, Brenda Centracchio, a former DCYF coworker who had moved to BHDDH, told her of an opening.

The two went on to share an office in BHDDH’s Developmental Disabilities Division, which gave Centracchio the opportunity to “witness Jill’s dedicated work ethic” and “her resolve to assist her clients and families to the nth degree.”

“I could think of no one better,” Centracchio said.

They had fun together, but the work was not, and is not, easy. Like other social workers in BHDDH’s Division of Developmental Disabilities, Murphy manages about 180 cases. While most are routine at any given time, some are challenging. That’s when she is there to help.

“She’s kind and calm,” said Brenda DuHamel, Associate Director for Administrative Services in BHDDH’s Developmental Disabilities Division. “That’s what people need. She’s just very easy to get along with.”

Of course, social workers are expected to help with problems and crises and find solutions or answers that allow people to move forward. Perhaps that’s why Murphy, when asked about her work, downplayed any accolades directed at her.

Instead, she talked about what’s kept her going all these years.

“I work with great people,” she said. “The support system that’s around me has been outstanding.”

She also said she enjoys “making sure that people are receiving what they need.”

“Some people just need to vent. Sometimes we’re the only people that will answer the phone,” she said. “You follow through, and you do what you have to do.”