A Good Foundation

Each year, thousands of children and adults of all abilities served by our Member Agencies find community, connection, and achievement on our six campuses. Below, Al Sigl Board Member Ann Kurz generously shares the impact Al Sigl has had in her life:

“From 1963-1972, I attended CP Rochester’s preschool, kindergarten, and summer day camp programs... Between my junior and senior year in high school, I worked with a “rehab therapist” at Rochester Rehabilitation in preparation for my going away to college...Today, I use CP Rochester’s service coordination, employ Epilepsy-Pralid as the fiscal intermediary for my self-direction plan, and participate in SportsNet. The Al Sigl Member Agencies gave me a good foundation to grow and become a capable, self-sufficient adult. Without that base of support, I probably would not be a Corn Hill homeowner, the treasurer of my homeowners’ association, a Wegmans employee with 28 years of service, an Ability Partners board member, an Al Sigl Foundation board member, a Peace of Christ prayer writer, and a Trinity University (DC) and U of R graduate—just to name a few of my life adventures!

Even with all of my successes, I still struggle to feel fully included in my communities. I often feel like I’m on the sidelines, watching from afar. Much of those feelings stems from deeply rooted attitudes, beliefs, or fears about disabilities that unnecessarily bar people from developing relationships. I long for more friendships that aren’t primarily based on my need for care but rather form as a result of common interests and occur naturally.

Changing attitudes takes time. The Al Sigl Community of Agencies does an excellent job placing people on paths to success. Yet, to realize full community access and inclusion, even more advocacy is needed. Above all, successful communities must celebrate ability in all people. For only when all people are fully accepted and included will true happiness and success occur.”

—Ann Kurz

Ann’s experience—taking part in multiple Member Agency programs—speaks to the heart of Al Sigl’s collaborative mission. Ann’s choice to give back, volunteering her insight and leadership as a Board Member and financial support as a donor, reminds us of how tremendously grateful we are for dedicated friends, like you, who choose to share our journey.

This year-end, your donation can go twice as far! We are grateful to our friends at Glover-Crask Charitable Trust who have offered a challenge grant of up to $25,000 for all new and increased gifts this year.

To make your gift today and help make stories like Ann’s possible, please visit alsigl.org.
Howdy Neighbors

Have you heard any good stories lately? In the past six months, I have been very fortunate to have opportunities to connect with many talented, committed volunteers and passionate professionals who have been teaching and telling “the new guy” some really good stories. Ann Kurz provided me a remarkable visit and I was thrilled when she offered to share her story with you. Ann’s experience and interactions with Al Sigl Member Agencies gave her a “good foundation to grow.” Her steely determination and positive attitude drive her many successes. I am humbled to hear Ann remind us that there remains significant work ahead to change attitudes while creating more opportunities for happiness and inclusion.

I was surrounded by good stories and the smiling faces of hundreds of dedicated volunteers, families and friends as we celebrated the 27th Annual Al Sigl Community WalkAbout at Eastview Mall. Trevor’s mom shared this story of how this collaborative event helps local families. “My son goes to CP Rochester Preschool,” said Mary. “From service coordination to physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy... He gets all his teachers and he gets to be a normal preschooler.” She continued, “It’s great that the whole community comes out and supports. You never really think about how much they could do for you until you have a family member that needs it.” Thank you to all the sponsors, donors and terrific partners who make WalkAbout so meaningful.

On the same weekend as WalkAbout, Rochester Institute of Technology students, faculty and volunteers were crafting stories of innovation while advancing our alliance in Effective Access Technologies by hosting an IdeaLab. During the two-day event, representatives from Al Sigl Member Agencies provided real-world insight as over sixty multi-discipline participants worked together to create technology solutions to challenges as diverse and yet inclusive as rock climbing, adaptive skiing, water sports, portable communication, steady eating utensils, and social games. On Sunday, the teams presented a stunning array of solutions, highlighting the breadth of talent at RIT. Many of these ideas will become student research projects. Some may even be developed for future use in a commercial or nonprofit setting, helping to change lives and perceptions about people of all abilities.

Another great story is that Mary Walsh Boatfield, President and CEO of CP Rochester, Happiness House, and Rochester Rehabilitation was named 2016 Executive of the Year at the Greater Rochester Awards. Thomas Kelly, chairman of Rochester Rehabilitation was honored for his Board Leadership and our good friends Phil Andolina and Lawley were recognized as an Outstanding Corporate Volunteer Group at the event. Congratulations to all!

Stories like these are happening every day in the innovative shared spaces where Al Sigl Member Agencies provide vital programs and services to tens of thousands. My gratitude for your support is rivaled only by these good great stories and the many ways our Member Agencies, volunteers, and friends are working together to make a difference in our community.

Thank you for all you do. Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday.

Gratefully,

Tom O’Connor

CEO Recognized for Innovative Leadership

Mary Walsh Boatfield, President and CEO of CP Rochester, Happiness House, and Rochester Rehabilitation was recently named 2016 Executive of the Year by the Rochester Business Journal and the United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc. at a ceremony held at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. The awards program recognizes contributions in the non-profit sector. Mary was recognized for her outstanding record of innovative leadership in providing services.

We congratulate Mary on this achievement and her exceptional service! To learn more about other agency news or upcoming events, please visit cprochester.org.

Fostering Connections

The National MS Society RAMS East Social Support Group has been meeting and supporting people living with MS for more than 40 years. The group celebrated the fall season by making birdseed ornaments to hang in trees around their homes. One of more than a dozen support and self-help groups offered in the greater Rochester area, the RAMS East group meets twice a month. The gatherings offer a chance to connect, learn from each other, and have fun enjoying activities together.

In addition to peer facilitated self-help groups like RAMS East, the Upstate New York Chapter offers a variety of support and educational opportunities. These include information and referral, services management, short term case management, educational and wellness programs, telephone and online education and support, and more to help people with MS and their families live their best lives.

To learn more about the National MS Society, please visit nationalMSsociety.org.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Helping Teens Connect and Take Charge

EPI recently hosted the Talk About It: Teen Epilepsy Weekend as part of November’s Epilepsy Awareness Month. The two-day event helped teens identify ways to take charge of their own health, including diet, managing medications, and effectively communicating with health care providers. The event, which featured speakers from the Strong Epilepsy Center at URMC and was funded in part by the Ronald McDonald House and individual donors, also offered young people a chance to connect with other teens living with epilepsy. “Epilepsy is something that very few people talk about,” said Pediatric Neurologist Dr. Inna Hughes, who joined Mike Radell, education and camp director for Camp EAGR, at the event. “Knowing that you are not alone and being able to talk about things you are experiencing with people who are going through the exact same thing is important.”

For more information about upcoming EPI events, including Chocolate Ball, A Night IN The Movies on February 4, please contact Stacey Rae Benner-Beattie at 585.442.6420 x2239 or Shaunta Collier-Santos at 585.442.6420 x2227.

Pretty in Pink

In October, Medical Motor Service put a brand new bus into service. Unlike the agency’s other buses with their traditional blue stripe, this one is decked out in pink in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness. The bus is in honor of survivors, fighters and those who lost their battle to the disease.

Stacy Lilley, who works as a call center representative at Medical Motor Service said, “When I walked out the back door to go home the bus was out there, bright white with the pink ribbon! As a survivor it made me feel awesome that MMS was supporting those who continue to fight this disease, the survivors and the many that we have lost. I LOVE IT!!”

The bus joins Medical Motors’ fleet of over 130 vehicles. Last year, the agency provided over 582,000 trips to over 12,500 residents of Rochester and Monroe County. To learn more, please visit medicalmotors.org.

Cleaning up for 30 years

Rochester Rehabilitation recently celebrated 30 years of providing janitorial services at the Kenneth B. Keating Federal Building, including cleaning, sanitation, snow removal, and ground maintenance. Rochester Rehabilitation is contracted through Source of America, a Federal program designed to offer jobs and competitive wages to individuals with disabilities®. Currently, ten Rochester Rehabilitation staff members are employed at the Federal Building, five of which are celebrating over 20 years of service. The longest serving employee recently celebrated 29 years with the agency.

Often the tenants go out of their way to show Rochester Rehabilitation staff just how much they appreciate the services provided. Two years ago, several people from the various offices in the Federal Building surprised one of the Rochester Rehabilitation employees, John Hahn, by purchasing him a bicycle so he wouldn’t have to walk to and from work. It is the excellent work performed over three decades that has nurtured this relationship and solidified it for years to come. To learn more about Rochester Rehabilitation, please visit rochesterrehab.org.

Hearing Tests May Prevent Memory Loss

Hearing loss is the third most common health problem in America today. Studies have shown individuals with untreated hearing loss may lose 30% to 40% of their ability to solve problems efficiently.

According to a recent article from The Better Hearing Institute (BHI), the connection between untreated hearing loss and diminished cognitive function may be caused by the brain’s resources to aid memory being already engaged working to hear what’s been said. That is one reason why the professional audiologists at Rochester Hearing & Speech Center suggest a hearing test once a year.

In addition to the connection to memory, hearing loss can be a sign of other health problems, including hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes. If left untreated, it can increase a person’s chances of developing dementia, depression, and social isolation. But hearing loss is treatable if caught early. A hearing test, one of the many services offered at Rochester Hearing & Speech, is quick and painless. In most cases, testing takes less than an hour. For more information, or to talk to a staff member, please visit RHSC.org or call 585.271.0680.
Leave a legacy

Please join us as we imagine a future that includes us all and take steps to invest in creating a better life for the thousands of people and families who count on the Al Sigl Community of Agencies today... and tomorrow.

If you are looking to make a legacy gift, please consider naming Al Sigl Community of Agencies in your will. You can make charitable gifts of cash, life income, retirement fund assets, stock or life insurance.

If you have already included Al Sigl in your plans, please let us know so that we can welcome you as a member of the Al Sigl Society, created to honor generous friends who express their intention to make a lasting gift.

Check with your financial advisor to find out how helping Al Sigl can also be a tax advantage to you or contact Debra Salmon at 585.442.4102 x2718.

President’s Circle of Hearts

The new D&C Digital headquarters downtown provided an elegant backdrop for this year’s President’s Circle of Hearts reception on November 2nd. The event highlighted the Democrat and Chronicle’s long history of generous support of Al Sigl as well as both organizations’ commitment to innovation and community leadership. Friends toured the new 42,000-square-foot facility, including exploring the new digital studio. Many thanks to the D&C for their kind support making the event possible and for the many friends who joined us to celebrate inclusion and abilities.

Guests listen as Dan Norselli, president of Democrat and Chronicle and D&C Digital, welcomed everyone to the event.

Karen and Andy Gallina, Ann Costello, Steve Russell

Louise and Justin Vigdor

Matthew and Heather Weins, Karen Zandi

JUST ONE NIGHT
CELEBRITY BARTENDING FOR AL SIGL COMMUNITY
COMING SOON
A Fine Night for Abilities

In addition to signature dishes and plentiful pours from over two dozen tasting partners at this year’s Fine Tastings for Al Sigl Community at Locust Hill Country Club on September 15th, local artists Rachel and Cordell Cordaro once again added an artistic flair to the sold-out event. The pair, long-time friends of Al Sigl, donated two beautiful, original works that were auctioned during the event. Cheers to our sponsors, Tasting Captains, and each of our wonderful Sports Committee volunteers and generous donors for another fine celebration.
A Meaningful Morning

Three cheers for the more than 600 friends of all ages and abilities who gathered together for the 27th Annual Al Sigl Community WalkAbout on October 30th inside Eastview Mall. Heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors, dedicated volunteers, and hundreds of walkers, rollers, and donors who helped raise more than $85,000 to benefit Al Sigl and our Member Agencies.

Thank you to all our Sponsors

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5-1-16 to 10-31-16
Heartfelt thanks for your generous support. To view this online, please visit alsigl.org/OurThanks.

IN HONOR OF:
Donald W. Ahlart's 50 years with WHAM ABC
Ms. Debra J. Salmon and Mr. Eric Huppert
Donald W. Ahlart in gratitude for speaking at our event
Ms. Andrea Childs
Bonnie DeVinney & Robert Thompson
Mr. Daniel M. Meyers
Andy & Karen Gallina as Recipients of the Rochester Rotary Award
Mr. William H. Mostyn, Interior Moving Services, Inc.
Mrs. E. James Hickey's Birthday
Mr. Daniel M. Meyers
Mary & Len LeBeau's 40th Wedding Anniversary
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*Deceased     We carefully checked our records; however, if a correction is in order, please contact us at 585.442.4102 x8948 or jpritchard@alsigl.org.
Al Sigl Community of Agencies is a collaborative community network that provides high-quality, cost-effective real estate and business services, while fostering community awareness and philanthropic support to a growing array of organizations that serve children and adults with disabilities® and special needs.

Look for your envelope this Feblueary!
Each dollar works together to create opportunities for everyone to be included in community life.

alsigl.org

Dialogue on Disability
THE HERMAN & MARGARET SCHWARTZ COMMUNITY SERIES
January 23-29
Tune in for this annual week-long programming initiative showcasing abilities and promoting inclusion.