

Winter 2018

Achieving More Together

CP Rochester
Epilepsy-Pralid, Inc.
Medical Motor Service
National Multiple Sclerosis Society,
Upstate New York Chapter
Rochester Hearing and Speech Center
Rochester Rehabilitation

Golisano Campus at Elmwood Celebrates 50 Years



"I'm honored to have been a part of this story. This year-end, please join me in celebrating this 50 year milestone and help meet the needs ahead by making your gift at alsigl.org today."

Justin Vigdor

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of Al Sigi Community of Agencies' flagship campus on Elmwood Avenue. Justin Vigdor, Al Sigi's Founding Board Chair, has seen our agencies grow from serving 3,000 people to serving over 55,000 children and adults and their families on six campuses. Reflecting on the milestone, he shared:

"In 1968, our dream was realized as the doors opened at Elmwood and South to welcome people of all ages and abilities to learn, grow and have their needs addressed. With no existing model to follow, a dedicated group of parents, advocates, and community volunteers explored new ways of thinking about collaboration, accessibility, and the demonstrated need to help people with special needs and their families. The final result was a fully-accessible building, the very first of its kind, with spaces adaptable to the unique needs of each agency, along with shared spaces open to all.

Initially, we were known as the Monroe County Center for Rehabilitative Agencies. Then, we received a modest gift from the estate of Al Sigi, a popular newsman who had a daily radio broadcast at the noon hour. In his gravelly voice, he spoke about "shut-ins" and people who needed assistance like transportation or crutches or wheelchairs. The board voted to name our unique collaboration, the new campus, in Al Sigi's honor."

Over time, the strength of our collaboration has remained steadfast, thanks to generous community volunteers and donors like you. Nearly twenty years ago, we renamed our flagship Elmwood Avenue location in honor of Tom Golisano, our generous local philanthropist. Over the years, as our agencies grew, so did the number of campuses, each uniquely designed to adapt to the needs of the people so well served there.

With your help, we will **Achieve More Together**



This issue is dedicated to our many **supporters and friends** who have shared in our mission.



Howdy Neighbors

2018 marks the 50-year anniversary of our dream home opening at 1000 Elmwood Avenue. To our good fortune, our Founder Justin Vigdor continues to represent and share what inspired that vision, the growth he has seen, and the profound impact for our community in our cover story. Justin and the numerous community leaders, families and volunteers involved faced many challenges in bringing this innovative concept to reality. They fully understood the need for these vital services. Today we celebrate these remarkable achievements over five decades.

Also in this issue, we are pleased to congratulate John Horvath, who was recognized with the Burton S. August, Sr. Award from AFP at the National Philanthropy Day luncheon.

On these pages you also see smiles from the many events we've hosted this year. You can read about how our dedicated volunteers helped AI Sigl raise critically needed funds for our Member Agencies. These funds also help AI Sigl provide the shared spaces, support services, and spaces adapted to meet the unique needs of each agency and the people they serve so well.

Stay tuned as we will have exciting updates in our next issue about our partnership with RIT for Effective Access Technology; our partnership with WXXI, Dialogue On Disability, which offers thought-provoking and entertaining programming each January; and construction of the Golisano Autism Center.

My gratitude for your support through our 50-plus years is rivaled only by the excitement I have for our upcoming journey to furthering our shared work. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely

Tom O'Connor



Earlier this year, AI Sigl welcomed Mark Ocwieja as the new Vice President of Operations. Mark came to AI Sigl from Hobart & William Smith Colleges where he was the Director of Facilities. We are pleased to have Mark join our team.

Welcome New Board Members

Board of Trustees



Richard McGrath, CPA



Dr. Bridgette Wiefeling



Dr. James Feuerstein

Board of Governors



Dr. Ryne Raffaele

AI Sigl Community of Agencies' Board of Trustees welcomed new Trustees Richard McGrath, CPA; Dr. Bridgette Wiefeling; and Dr. James Feuerstein representing Rochester Hearing & Speech Center, an AI Sigl Member Agency. Officers of the Board of Trustees are Thomas Wilmot, Jr., Chair; John McKenna, Vice Chair; Michael Trojjan, Vice Chair/Facilities Chair; Nancy Catarisano, Treasurer; and Alex Whitaker, Secretary.

The AI Sigl Foundation Board of Governors welcomed new Governor Dr. Ryne Raffaele. The AI Sigl Foundation Board of Governors also elected new officers. They are Kathleen Whelehan, Chair; Philip Andolina, Vice Chair; Joseph Casion, Treasurer; and Matthew Parrilli, Secretary.

Volunteer Recognized for Exemplary Leadership

Congratulations to our good friend John Horvath, who received the Burton S. August, Sr. Award for Community Leadership as part of this year's National Philanthropy Day celebrations. AI Sigl Community of Agencies was grateful to be selected by John as the recipient of a \$2,500.00 honorarium from the August family as part of the award.

John first served as a Board Member for United Cerebral Palsy, now known as CP Rochester, in 1968. Soon after, he agreed to help with the first AI Sigl

fund drive for the original Elmwood Campus. In 1979, John joined the AI Sigl Board, where he served until his retirement in 2005. He still serves as an honorary member of the AI Sigl Board of Governors. John's commitment to AI Sigl, CP Rochester, and over 25 other non-profit organizations in the Rochester community is truly remarkable. For 50 years, his commitment has continued to make Rochester a better place.



More Than Transportation



Cindy, now in her 60s, is an energetic woman who loves to make people laugh. Cindy is also diabetic and has high blood pressure. Six years ago she became an amputee. Cindy's daughter and son-in-law both work full time so she depends on Medical Motor Service to get to her three dialysis appointments each week. Cindy lives in Rush-Henrietta and had a lot of difficulty finding a transportation service that would schedule multiple trips. One service said she would have to pay nearly \$200 each week,

which sparked the worry that she'd have to sell her home. That is when Cindy turned to Medical Motor Service.

"I know I can absolutely count on Medical Motors," she says. "My driver is Jim. When he pulls up, he jumps out of the car to help me down the driveway. When we get to the dialysis center, he goes and gets a wheelchair and brings it out to me." Cindy pauses, "He's not just a driver; I think of Jim as a friend." During their weekly rides, they share recipes, suggest new ingredients to try, and even check back to see how the meal turned out. It is conversations, connections, like these that make the ride about more than a destination. To learn more about Medical Motor Service, please visit medicalmotors.org.



Learning Through Play

Each year, Rochester Hearing & Speech Center's Early Intervention Developmental Groups visit Gro-Moore Farms for a fun Fall tradition. The program, which serves toddlers aged 20 months through 3 years experiencing speech or developmental delays, helps little ones learn new skills through therapeutic activities based on play and exploration. Each classroom is staffed with a Speech Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and Special Education Teacher working together to provide individualized attention to best support each child.

A visit to Gro-Moore Farms with RHSC's experienced educators and clinicians offers hands-on opportunities to explore textures while stacking pumpkins or petting a bunny. Balancing on a bale, saying the color of a flower, deciding which way to turn next in the hay maze—each of these experiences offer movement, language and learning opportunities to help practice skills learned in the classroom out in a community setting. To learn more, please call 585.271.0680 or visit RHSC.org.



Driving Forward

"There are many people in my life that have helped me through the challenges and so I keep on moving forward."

These are the words of Travis, who was referred to CP Rochester at a young age after being diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Travis also learned to drive with Rochester Rehabilitation's DriveOn program. Travis remembered how, even though his first driver's license test did not go well, he kept moving forward to accomplish his goal of being able to drive

independently. When he took the test a second time, he passed and received his license. Travis now has his own custom van, equipped with hand controls for the gas/brake and for turning so that he is able to drive himself.

Travis is currently attending classes at Monroe Community College. He is working on completing his associate's degree in the Spring. After that, he plans on transferring to RIT to pursue a bachelor's degree in Computer Systems Technology. In addition to his college courses, which take up most of his time, he likes playing power soccer and trying to recruit new players to join his team. To learn more about CP Rochester, please visit cprochester.org. To learn more about DriveOn, visit driveonrocks.org.



Paths to Empowerment



Earlier this year, Fatimah learned about Rochester Rehabilitation's Paths to Empowerment program which provides individuals transitioning from Public Assistance job retention support to help them meet their goal of self-sufficiency. She had been working as a housekeeper and liked her job but her ultimate goal was to attend MCC to study to become a Surgical Technician. She was also

interested in learning more about creating a budget and finding better housing for her and her three children.

Fatimah worked with Rochester Rehabilitation staff to find housing information and apartment listings. She received financial literacy information and other resources for additional budgeting assistance. She was also referred to Rochester Rehabilitation's Job Search Café. She was able to complete her application for MCC, where she began attending classes in September. She is still working and she and her children are doing great. Fatimah thanked the Paths' team for their support. To learn more about Paths to Empowerment or Rochester Rehabilitation's employment programs, please visit RochesterRehab.org.



Finding the Right Resources



When Lisa was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2015, her neurologist told her not to research the disease on the internet unless she was visiting the National MS Society web site. "She said I could read about MS and what to expect," Lisa says. "NMSS was my very first source of information about my diagnosis." As time went

on, in addition to reading the resources online, she began to attend events, including information sessions where respected neurologists talk about current research for MS as well as workshops on topics including Positive Thinking, Resiliency, and Free From Falls.

It was at these events when Lisa first began talking to others living with MS about what they were going through. "I'm a pretty private person, so it goes against my nature a bit to say it, but I would tell anyone who is newly diagnosed not to hesitate before reaching out. The people at NMSS are really nice and not scary at all to talk to on the phone!" she says with a laugh. She adds, "There are so many ways you can connect. You can talk to other people on the phone about what you are going through. There are in-person programs. There are resources online." To learn more about local programs and events, please visit nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NYR.



Taking Control of Seizures

Martha, who served as a counselor at Camp EAGR for the first time this year, has been living with epilepsy since High School. Now 30, Martha underwent multiple surgeries this year to implant a neurological device into her skull. The device is designed to detect warning signs and use neuro-stimulation to cut short or prevent seizures. Martha tried medications to manage her epilepsy. A special diet, called the Ketogenic diet, can also be effective. If those do not work, surgical implants are another option.

Martha is often surprised at how little most people know about epilepsy. She notes that, "I've heard that some people think epilepsy is contagious. It's not." She continues, "It is a neurological disorder that results from abnormal electrical activities in the brain." People living with epilepsy can experience a range of symptoms, not only the grand mal seizures most often depicted in movies or TV shows. Sometimes a person

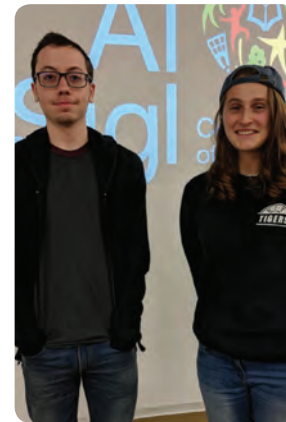
just appears to lose focus for a short period, even mid-sentence. Some experience strange tastes, smells, or sudden bursts of emotion. "For a lot of people with epilepsy, like me, it's not an emergency," Martha says. "My friends and family know what

to do." To learn more about Epilepsy-Pralid's programs and services, please visit epiny.org.



RIT IdeaLab Highlights Inclusion

The weekend of September 29-30th, multi-disciplinary teams of students and faculty gathered at RIT's Simone Center for Innovation for the Fall 2018 IdeaLab. Volunteers and staff from AI Sigl, CP Rochester, and Mary Cariola Children's Center partnered with the teams as they worked to create solutions to access technology challenges. AI Sigl's 2018 co-op interns, John and Sam, took part. John's team worked on a universal table design. Sam's team worked on a tool to help provide sensory stimulation for wheelchair users, increasing spatial cues within their surroundings. In four years, AI Sigl's Effective Access Technology Partnership with Rochester Institute of Technology has sparked over 70 access and inclusion projects.



Our Golisano Campus welcomes friends both day and night with the installation of new exterior signage that shines bright.





Teeing Up for Abilities

Nearly 200 golfers and volunteers gathered at Midvale Country Club on June 11th to celebrate abilities with Honorary Chair, Justin Vigdor. Dr. Dan Caccamise, one of the volunteers who helped organize the first Sports Classic golf tournament, also took part in the event, which raised over \$110,000 to benefit the more than 55,000 children and adults served by AI Sigl Member Agencies each year.

Many thanks to Chair Pat DiLucia and the many volunteers of the AI Sigl Sports Committee for their dedication to celebrating abilities. Special thanks to the Democrat and Chronicle, our Titanium sponsor, and to each of our sponsors.



Dr. Dan Caccamise, Founding AI Sigl Sports Classic Volunteer



Cliff Edington, Jeremy Babcock, Howard Ward, Vernon Blue



Justin Vigdor, Founder and Honorary 2018 Tournament Chair



April Synyard, Cindi Spezio, Jennifer Schumacher, Dan Judd

Thank you Golf Classic Sponsors **Democrat & Chronicle**

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Another Ace Year for Tennis

AI Sigl's Tennis Benefit is the only charitable team tennis tournament in Rochester. This year's event, held August 18-19, was the most successful ever. The fun kicked off with Saturday's Draw Party at the Tennis Club of Rochester. The next day, 72 players took part in the tournament at Midtown

Athletic Club, raising over \$25,000. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers—especially Joe Eduardo, Bill Martin, and Pati Martin—and event sponsors and friends who made this success possible.

Thank you
Tennis Classic Sponsors



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Photo by: Dick Bennett Photography

A Very Fine Night for Abilities

Over 350 friends gathered at Fine Tastings at Locust Hill Country Club on September 27th as guests enjoyed plentiful pours and more from over 20 different tasting partners. The event raised over \$74,000 to benefit AI Sigi Member Agencies. Three cheers for our event sponsors, tireless Sports Committee volunteers and friends for making this such an amazing event each year.



Joyce Weir, Ann Kurz



Scott Pittinaro, Sandy Sloane, Lauren Kolb



Torri Maccagnano, Linda Garvey, Stephen Garvey



Dr. Ryne Raffaele, Dr. Barry Culhane, Dr. Dan Phillips,
Justin Vigdor, Dr. Christine Licata

Thank you

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President's Circle of Hearts

Friends gathered at the Golisano Campus on Elmwood on November 15th in honor of the campus' 50th Anniversary as part of this year's President's Circle of Hearts celebration.



Many thanks to US Ceiling Corp for their continued sponsorship of the event.



Bob and Mary Bergin, Roger and Mary Jo Brandt



Steve Russell, Harriette and Dr. Jack Howitt



Kathleen Whelehan, Randy Schuster



Ed Geska, Art Pitt, Melissa Geska



Phil Andolina, Christina Burdett, Scott Burdett



Pumpkins On Parade

Heartfelt thanks to Gro-Moore Farms for choosing AI Sigl as the beneficiary of Pumpkins on Parade on October 1st. The evening celebrated creativity, collaboration, and inclusion as 35 pumpkins decorated by AI Sigl Member Agency program participants, artists, and volunteers were auctioned to raise funds. Generous Bale Sponsors and ticket sales also helped the event raise over \$10,000 to officially kick off the 29th Annual AI Sigl Community WalkAbout.

Thank you Pumpkins on Parade Sponsors



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29th Annual WalkAbout

Over 600 people of all ages and abilities served by AI Sigl Member Agencies gathered at Eastview Mall on October 28th to celebrate abilities and inclusion together along with plenty of Halloween-themed fun. The event raised over \$75,000. Heartfelt thanks to our event sponsors, volunteers, and everyone who helped make the event such a memorable morning together.

Each year, we ask people to share their reason #WhyIWalkAbout. This year, the Hendy family shared:

"Teagan, our oldest daughter, was born with Cerebral Palsy and went to preschool at CP Rochester. It was her first year there that we went to WalkAbout and she loved it. We love the costume contest; we've gone as a family dressed up as superheroes, one year we went as pirates. After Teagan passed in 2015, we continued to go to WalkAbout. It made sense. WalkAbout is a way we can do some good in her honor. It brings us so much joy to see people enjoying themselves and see people with special needs being part of the community and having fun and we love that. Teagan is with us when we are there. It's bittersweet."



The Hendy family



Photos by: Jolana Babacek Photography



A legacy of dedicated support

The Honorable Robert H. Wagner was at the table when local agencies met to form what became our AI Sigl Community

of Agencies. He helped found our board of directors in 1966 and served as the representative for The Arc of Monroe County. He served as a member of our Board of Trustees and Governors and was an Honorary Board Member. He passed away this fall at the age of 97.

For over 50 years, Judge Wagner with his wife Winnie shaped and encouraged our work together. We were honored when they became members of our AI Sigl Society, including us in their estate plans.

Their lasting generosity ensures that together we will continue to help people of all abilities accomplish great things.

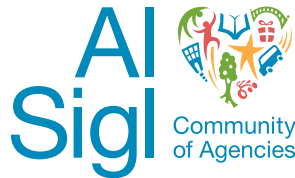
If you have already included AI Sigl in your plans, please let us know so that we can honor you now for your generosity, and you can enjoy knowing what a difference your gift will make. For more information, please contact Debra Salmon at **585.442.4102** ext. **2718**.

AI 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.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact **Jessica** by phone at **585.442.4102** ext. **8948** or by email at jpritchard@alsigl.org



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Help for Families

In July, the Golisano Autism Center launched a new collaborative community initiative. Staffed by trained professionals, this local information and referral service provides help for people with autism, their families, and caregivers. The HelpLine offers a broad range of autism related information and support in real time. Melissa Parrish, a Family Autism Navigator

on-site at the Boys and Girls Club, is also available to provide one-on-one advice and support to families living in the City of Rochester. The HelpLine is staffed between 6 AM-midnight, 7 days a week.

Melissa joined Sarah Milko, AutismUp's Executive Director, at the Little Theatre on November 12th to represent the Golisano Autism Center in a community Q&A

discussion after a screening of "The Limits of My World". The event was part of Move To Include, our partnership with WXXI and The Golisano Foundation designed to promote inclusion. To learn more, please visit GolisanoAutismCenter.org. To leave a message after hours, email: HelpLine@GolisanoAutismCenter.org.



A unique way to celebrate, honor, and remember...

A tribute gift can be a thoughtful way to honor or remember a beloved family member, good friend or colleague. Give a gift in honor or in memory to AI Sigl Community of Agencies and we will send a card acknowledging your thoughtful gesture, mailed to the person you designate.

To make a gift by check please send to:

AI Sigl Community of Agencies
1000 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 300
Rochester, NY 14620

Please include: Name of honoree, and if applicable, the occasion the gift is honoring. Include the name and address of the honoree or specified recipient if you wish us to notify them. You can also add a message. To make a gift online please visit alsigl.org and click on the red Donate Now button.

If you have any questions please contact Jodi at **585.442.4102** ext. **8943** or email jsalatti@alsigl.org

