A Shared Vision

Over two dozen nonprofits share space on Al Sigl’s six campuses. Our collaborative was founded in 1962 by a group of parents and providers who envisioned a new way for independent nonprofits to share space while maintaining distinct missions and programs. Today, our two Affiliates, seven Member Agencies, five community partnerships, and twelve nonprofit tenants serve over 50,000 children and adults with disabilities® and their families.

In addition to providing space at below market rates, Al Sigl’s innovative model offers benefits such as flexible floorplans able to help programs adapt to evolving community needs, as well as other shared services and philanthropic supports.

Stronger Together

Starbridge, formerly The Advocacy Center and LDA Life and Learning Services, has had a unique journey with Al Sigl Community. For years, the agency leased office space on Al Sigl’s Wolk Campus. In 2017, Starbridge began to take steps to become a Member Agency. In January, that plan became a reality.

“We have appreciated the benefits of being near remarkable agencies, all connected by a shared goal of supporting children and adults of diverse abilities to lead successful lives,” says Colin Garwood, President/CEO of Starbridge.

“Becoming a member of this collective allows us to contribute our particular strengths to the overall strength of the Al Sigl Community.”

Tom O’Connor, President of Al Sigl Community, adds, “Starbridge’s work helping people of all abilities achieve success in education, employment, and healthy living—especially critical at this time—complements the important programs and services offered by the agencies serving thousands across the community each year on Al Sigl’s six campuses.”

To learn more about Al Sigl’s collaborative mission and history, please visit alsigl.org.
Howdy Neighbors

A good friend shared that this pandemic has proven that although we desire the destination and value the journey, it is the company that matters. Throughout the last year, we’ve heard so many stories of profound loss, uncertainty and isolation. Yet we have also experienced how determination and hope continue to bring us together. At Al Sigl Community, we remain committed to staying socially connected even as we are physically distanced.

We have witnessed tremendous innovation as our agencies have created new ways of providing essential services while keeping their clients and staff safe and healthy. In 2020, we implemented new safety protocols and HVAC updates across 20 buildings on our six campuses. We worked together to help agencies safely remain open while responding to rapid change. We are inspired by our agencies, their leaders, and teams for their dedication and resilience.

We invested in new technologies to help us stay connected. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers and sponsors, we found creative ways to hold long-standing events, our Fine Tastings and Al Sigl Sports Classic along with our first-ever WalkAbout car parade, to continue to raise needed funds for our Member Agencies. We were pleased with strong participation from good friends like you, who joined us on these new platforms and stepped up to lend your support. We are grateful for your unwavering generosity.

I am particularly proud of two milestone achievements in the last year, despite the pandemic. Al Sigl is thrilled to welcome Starbridge, our first new Member Agency in 34 years. And what a fitting year to further expand the range of services offered on our campuses for children and adults with special needs and their families. As needs grow, our collaborative will continue to adapt to meet them.

Also the opening of the brand new Golisano Pediatric Behavioral Health and Wellness Building of the University of Rochester Medical Center last June. As mental health concerns are amplified by the pandemic, this critical partnership provides desperately-needed services that complement the full range of supports provided by our Member Agencies. We are ever grateful to Tom Golisano for helping to make this new facility on Al Sigl’s Schwartz Family Campus available to the community.

Again, thank you for staying connected with us. We look forward to your good company in the months ahead.

Thomas O’Connor
President

Access to Mental Health Services

The number of people reporting experiencing mental health challenges has risen dramatically during the pandemic. Rochester Rehabilitation offers a variety of mental health services designed to provide help, hope, and support.

Ashley Teague, a participant in the Ventures PROS program, said the program helped her rediscover a sense of purpose. At first, she remembers, seeking help was difficult. “It was hard to reach out,” she said, “I felt like I was letting people down or that people wouldn’t believe me.” After getting help, she says, “I realized how proud people were of me” for taking action to improve her own mental health. To learn more about Rochester Rehabilitation’s programs, including Ventures PROS, visit rochesterrehab.org.

A Vital Lifeline

The organization known today as Medical Motor Service was created by volunteers during the 1919 flu epidemic to ensure access to medical care. Over the years, it has grown to become a transportation lifeline for thousands. As many providers paused operations last Spring, they continued to offer access to critically-needed services, such as rides to dialysis treatments. Through a partnership with Lifespan, Foodlink, and Goodwill of the Finger Lakes, they have also delivered hundreds of boxes of food each week during the pandemic.

In March, they began partnering with Lifespan to provide rides for seniors and people with disabilities for vaccination appointments. Including trips scheduled through Monroe County and other sources, the agency is transporting 25-50 people daily for visits.

“I’m very proud of our staff,” says Bob Topel, Executive Director of Medical Motor Service. “They understand how important mobility is for our riders. And now I’m glad we can play a part in helping people getting back to their routines by making it easier to access these vaccines.” To learn more, visit medicalmotors.org.
Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999, Calvin Stroud was symptom-free for the first eight or nine years of living with the disease. “No one could tell unless I told them,” he says. But in 2012, he began to have trouble with mobility and turned to a fold-up cane for help. “Then, I started to have more falls.” Today, he uses a motorized wheelchair.

Coming to terms with using assistive devices is what Stroud calls “a work in progress.” For people living with MS, assistive devices can make a big difference in staying active. But learning to accept them can also be a big challenge. That is where access to an MS Navigator can help. A virtual resource, MS Navigators help people with MS find the information, resources and support they need to live their best life. While the pandemic suspended in-person activities for many, this program continued to serve 125 people locally. To learn more about the MS Navigator Program, visit nationalmssociety.org/chapters/nyr.

Staying Connected

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New Name Highlights Independence

In January, Epilepsy-Pralid, Inc. became Empowering People’s Independence (EPI), expressing the agency’s deep commitment to providing innovative and individualized services to support the needs of people with brain injury, developmental disabilities®, and epilepsy.

“Empowering People’s Independence is the perfect name for our organization because it captures the essence of who we are,” said Jeff Sinsebox, President and CEO of EPI. “It expresses our core commitment to give voice to the choices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities®, to empowering them to reach their aspirations and live their lives to the fullest.”

“The agency has seen significant growth in the last decade,” said Ryan Zitzka, EPI Board President. “We have expanded our services. More importantly, we have invested in innovative service models that offer individuals with disabilities® and their families more flexibility and more choices to access the services they need.”

To learn more, visit epiny.org.

Making the Transition

In 2020, CP Rochester opened new Transitional Apartments for individuals with special needs who are transitioning from their family homes to independent living.

Rather than construct a new building, with support from Al Sigl Community of Agencies, CP Rochester was able to partner with New York State Homes and Community Renewal, the Golisano Foundation, and others to renovate an existing residence to serve an unmet need.

The project includes seven one-bedroom apartments with common living areas. Residents work on skills needed to live independently, including money management, home maintenance, and self-care. Residents will naturally shift to more autonomous community living within two years. Residents also have the opportunity to bond with others sharing similar experiences.

To learn more about CP Rochester’s many residential and other programs, visit cprochester.org.
In 2003, Al Sigl partnered with WXXI and the Emerson Foundation to transform a small annual lecture into a one-week programming initiative in January called Dialogue on Disability: The Herman & Margaret Schwartz Community Series. That year, 30,000 people tuned in for TV and radio shows highlighting the stories of people with special needs. In 2014, with generous support from the Golisano Foundation, the week became part of a year-round initiative called Move to Include, reaching more than one million locally.

In 2020, the partnership expanded once again to include five public media stations across the nation. Over 50 video segments, many created here in Rochester with the help of people served by Al Sigl Member Agencies, are available as on-demand programming. These videos are available to classrooms nationwide through a digital resource for educators via PBS.

In January, Ann Kurz, an Al Sigl Foundation Board Member who attended early Schwartz lectures in the 1990s, appeared in a piece for WXXI about the history of the partnership, along with Tom O'Connor, Dan Meyers, and Norm Silverstein.

“It takes a long time to change attitudes,” says Ann “I think it’s so important to keep chipping away at the negative perceptions and replace them with positive ideas.”

The Reason I Jump

On Tuesday, January 26th, Al Sigl teamed up with WXXI, the Golisano Foundation, and the Golisano Autism Center for a virtual discussion about the documentary The Reason I Jump. The film examines the stories of five non-speaking young people on the autism spectrum.

Al Sigl’s Tom O’Connor joined Beth Ciardi, Director of the Golisano Autism Center, and moderator Evan Dawson of WXXI. Panelists included Jerry Rothwell, documentary filmmaker and director of the film, Clara Washington, the parent of a non-speaking young person, Teddy Milko, a non-speaking autistic young adult, and Sarah Milko, Executive Director of AutismUp.

Our thanks to everyone who took part! Over 200 people viewed the film, and hundreds more tuned in for the virtual discussion.
With gratitude to the caring friends, volunteers, donors, and staff who made it possible for Al Sigl Community to keep our six campuses and 20 buildings open during the past year as our Member Agencies, Affiliates and neighbors provided essential services during unprecedented times.

You’ve been a steady part of our journey as we explored new ways to connect. Technology allowed our agencies to adapt and innovate. We celebrated annual events with familiar faces, sharing virtual updates on how our agencies were serving the community, all while raising critically-needed funds.

With determination and support, we truly honored our collaborative vision.

Thank you for helping us Achieve More Together.

Consolidated Support and Revenue

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Assets

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Liability

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Visit alsigl.org for full list of Donors, Honor & Memorial gifts
51st Annual
Al Sigl Sports Classic
Golf Tournament

More than one hundred golfers enjoyed staggered flights of tee times under clear blue skies on Thursday, September 3rd at Midvale Country Club, followed by a delicious take-home meal. Many thanks for the support of our Chair, John Brady, and the dedication of the Sports Committee for proudly continuing the tradition of one of Rochester’s oldest and most successful philanthropic tournaments. Thanks to our wonderful sponsors, golfers, and volunteers, who together raised more than $70,000 to support Al Sigl Member Agencies.

Thank you to our 2020 Golf Sponsors
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Al Sigl Tennis Benefit

Over 50 players joined us at the Tennis Club of Rochester on Saturday, August 8th, raising more than $23,000 to benefit Al Sigl Member Agencies. Joe Eduardo first shared his vision for a tennis event in 2009. In honor of Joe’s dedication over the years growing the tournament, he was presented with a plaque that will be displayed at the Tennis Club of Rochester recognizing winners in each division. We are grateful for the unwavering support of Joe Eduardo, Bill Martin, Tennis Club of Rochester, our volunteer committee and loyal tennis community!
Fine Tastings a Success

Wednesday, September 23rd marked our first-ever hybrid Fine Tastings event. Guests learned culinary tips as they cooked a delicious meal along with Locust Hill’s Chef George Gremminger. Many shared photos of their creations, including Ann Kurz. The more than 100 guests viewing from home, joined by a small in-person group at Locust Hill, also enjoyed sips of unique local wines with renowned sommelier Lorraine Hems. The event raised more than $39,000 to benefit Al Sigl Member Agencies. Heartfelt thanks to the Fine Tastings committee for their hard work and creativity and our sponsors, guests, and volunteers for their generous support. We are grateful for the opportunity to keep our friends connected while apart!

Thank you to our 2020 Sponsors

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Al Sigl Community WalkAbout Car Parade

We took our WalkAbout outdoors this year and shared a car parade with friends and community members. Cars arrived decked out in Halloween decor filled with smiling faces and costume characters. Many thanks to our wonderful volunteer committee for providing an opportunity for people to join together safely for family-friendly fun while celebrating inclusion and abilities. $53,000 was raised to support Al Sigl Member Agencies.
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.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Jodi by phone at 585.442.4102 ext. 8943 or by email at jsalatti@alsigl.org.