

Winter 2021

Achieving More Together

CP Rochester

Empowering People's
Independence (EPI)

Medical Motor Service

National Multiple Sclerosis Society,
Upstate New York

Rochester Hearing
and Speech Center

Rochester Rehabilitation

Starbridge

Working Together to Best Meet the Needs of the Community



Lou Langie, Jr., has been an active AI Sigl volunteer for over 30 years, after being invited for a tour by colleagues in the early 1980s. "I still remember that tour," he recalls, "Once I saw the wonderful work the agencies were doing and the help that people received, I was very impressed. You could see how the agencies were working together to best meet the needs of the community. It was clear that this was an organization that I wanted to support."

Following the example of those who first invited him to get involved, Lou has asked colleagues and friends to volunteer in support of AI Sigl's collaborative mission. Several have gone on to serve in Board leadership roles. Lou's daughter, Roberta Van Winkle, currently volunteers on the Board of Governors.

"I actually started volunteering for AI Sigl back when I was in sixth grade," remembers Roberta. "When I returned to Rochester after college, I was looking for one or two nonprofit organizations to support. AI Sigl was one that I chose. The way the collaboration is structured is so unique. By providing real estate and supports to the agencies that share space on AI Sigl's campuses, the agencies can focus more clearly on the needs of the people they serve."

This year, our Member Agencies and the 55,000 people they serve have faced another year of incredible challenges. With so much uncertainty, more and more people are turning to AI Sigl Member Agencies for help and support.

We hope you will join Lou and Roberta in making a gift in support of our work together. Your gift today will help children and adults of all abilities lead more independent lives.

For Lou, the reason is simple, "When you think of giving, you have to think of AI Sigl."

To make your gift today, please visit alsigl.org.



This issue of broadcast is
generously underwritten by:



**"I encouraged others to volunteer,
especially young people, because I felt that,
of all the organizations I knew in the
community, the AI Sigl agencies were
impacting more people that needed help."**

— Lou Langie, Jr.



Howdy Neighbors

Newsman Al Sigl would begin his noontime radio broadcast with an observation about Rochester weather, local news updates and then typically comment on a concern that required attention and response. As colder air settles, light strings are feathered around trees and on buildings, challenging shorter daylight as seasonal changes take hold. Covid cases are on the rise again, creating a growing need for

an array of essential services, while delaying a collective "return to normal", that we all desire. Even if we concede that normal will be different post-Covid, these increased demands arrive against a backdrop of care professionals, non-profit employees and health systems that are strained and weary, lacking the resources and staffs needed, yet determined to help. Over time we gain perspective, hoping that soon this endless chapter of Covid will become a period of learning and response in our storied history.

Lou Langie Jr., featured in the cover story, recognized over 40 years ago "how the agencies were working together to best meet the needs of the community", and he started recruiting friends and colleagues to get involved and support this important work. Lou shared that he wore out a pair of dress shoes giving tours of Al Sigl's first building at Elmwood and South Avenue, showcasing the unique spaces created for collaboration in support of people with disabilities. Lou is a social influencer with a warm, embracing leadership style that he shared, along with so many others, to help support Al Sigl's growth from a single building on one campus, to eighteen buildings on six campuses. I am humbled by the commitment of an army of volunteers, like Lou and his wonderful daughter Roberta, who remain engaged and supportive of Al Sigl over decades. I am inspired by the thousands of dedicated employees across our community who are working creatively and resiliently, to keep meeting so many service needs, which you will read more about in this issue.

I want to thank you for staying connected with us. I have shared that I wish the term social distancing instead be physical distancing - we can be physically apart, yet need to be socially together. Please continue to be advocates for inclusion and collaboration. Share your patience, understanding and kindness with others as we continue to Achieve More Together.

Wishing you and your loved ones healthy and memorable holidays. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Thomas O'Connor
President

P.S. Kudos to our hero Dr. Barry Culhane (pictured below) who was honored by RIT with a Lifetime Service Award on Veterans Day.



Member Agencies

CP Rochester Celebrates 75 Years

CP Rochester has enriched the lives of many for the past 75 years by offering services to children, adults and their families, employment opportunities, internships for college students, and numerous community volunteer opportunities.

In 1945, newsman Al Sigl made an announcement asking for a tricycle that could be modified for a "handicapped child." Naomi Amdursky heard this plea and discussed it with her husband, Ralph.

The Amdursky's young son had cerebral palsy. To get answers as to what their son was experiencing, "We were sent to Boston Children's Hospital, then to Dr. Phelps' Clinic in Maryland, then to a Training Private Home in Florida. All this was very expensive but it had to be done!" Naomi said. With these visits, they realized the importance of having a local facility that could cater to the needs of children with similar disabilities thus, the Cerebral Palsy Association of the Rochester Area, Inc. (CP Rochester) was established in 1946 by families whose children did not have access to local, community-based services.

Today, the nonprofit serves more than 2,600 individuals diagnosed with developmental, intellectual and acquired disabilities and their families. To learn more about CP Rochester's wide range of services

for all ages, visit
cprochester.org.





Writing Her Own Story

Jenny is a young woman with autism and mental health challenges who attends EPI's Day Habilitation Program. Jenny is also a comic book artist. She loves Japanese culture and anime, Japanese animated movies and illustrated books. Jenny wrote and illustrated her own graphic book *Transformers Moon*, an adventure-filled story that's a creative mashup of Transformers and Sailor Moon.

Jenny always dreamed of having her story produced in an animated movie. And the EPI team was there to support her dream. The EPI team set about learning and teaching Jenny how to create a digital cartoon using iMovie and a donated iPad. Jenny is now working on producing a *Transformers Moon* cartoon, soon to be available on YouTube.

"Producing *Transformers Moon* is the single most important thing in Jenny's life," says Mary, Jenny's mom. "The team at EPI have been incredible at supporting Jenny's dreams. It means everything to her."

To learn more about the many ways that EPI helps empower people of all abilities to reach their individual goals and aspirations, visit epiny.org.



Benefits of a Career as a Driver

"The best part of the job is the kids. It's absolutely the kids. They always put a smile on your face."

Linda has been part of the Medical Motor Service team for 26 years. She can list a number of things she likes about her job. Her young riders are at the top of that list.



Her routes take her across Monroe County, from Hilton to Honeoye Falls. "Rochester, Pittsford, Fairport, East Rochester, wherever they send me, I go," she says with a laugh.

"I like the freedom," she says. "As a driver, you get to meet and make friends with new people," she

explains, "You get to see kids, and sometimes I drive adults as well. You strike up conversations. You can make their day, or sometimes they make your day."

Another reason Linda likes her job is the knowledge that the young riders, adults, and families she serves often have very limited options when it comes to transportation. Over the years, she has seen how the need has grown for the services Medical Motor Service provides.

"Many people do not realize we serve people from all walks of life across Monroe County," she says. "We take people to medical visits, foster care visits, grocery trips, adult day programs, everything. We do it all."

To learn more about Medical Motor Service, please visit medicalmotors.org.



Finding Support, Building Connections

This Fall, the National MS Society announced a new program for the MS Community. Offered monthly, New to MS: Navigating Your Journey is an interactive virtual program where people who are new to MS can share, learn, and connect with others. The program helps address the challenges of a new diagnosis and how to identify strategies to help individuals navigate their journey. Topics focus on different types of MS, common symptoms, treatments, wellness techniques, dealing with emotions, and managing relationships.

"Some of the online forums and communities I've popped in on have only served to make me afraid. This kind of program was what I needed," shared one participant. "When I first read the invite link email that mentioned an opportunity to connect with others, I got nervous it

would be like a small-group sharing in breakout rooms. Specific questions to answer in the chat made it easy and comfortable, while I still felt encouraged by the other participants' responses."

For more information and additional program dates, please visit nationalMSSociety.org/NewToMS.



Save
the
Date

on Dialogue
Disability
THE HERMAN & MARGARET
SCHWARTZ COMMUNITY SERIES

Tune in to WXXI **January 24-30** for *Dialogue on Disability: the Herman & Margaret Schwartz Community Series*. This week-long series, made possible with generous support from the Fred L. Emerson Foundation, serves as the cornerstone of the year-long MOVE TO INCLUDE initiative celebrating abilities. For program listings, visit alsigl.org.

Communication for Life



In April of 2020, at the age of three, Faithlynn started to receive speech-language therapy with Rochester Hearing and Speech Center. Within days, RHSC was forced to pause in-person services due to COVID-19. Faithlynn then continued her speech therapy through the Teletherapy program.

At first, her parents were concerned that Teletherapy would be too challenging. But their daughter instantly connected with her speech therapist, Christine, and accomplished a great deal throughout the virtual sessions. "Christine's therapy techniques

were practical, fun, and age-appropriate. The tactics she used made every session enjoyable and were designed to hold a young child's attention," remarked Faithlynn's mom Shakeela.

One year later, Faithlynn graduated from RHSC's speech-language therapy program. Although it was a bittersweet moment for all involved, Faithlynn's parents could not have asked for a better program or therapist to fit their daughter's needs.

"Our goal as her parents was to make sure she succeeded in therapy during her preschool years and had her speech corrected before kindergarten," Shakeela said, "Christine made that possible!"

To learn more about RHSC's programs for people of all ages, visit [RHSC.org](https://www.rhsc.org) or call **585.271.0680**.



Strengthening Working Families



As the mother of two young boys, Brishae courageously entered the LPN program at the Isabella Graham Hart School of Practical Nursing. The 27-year-old was struggling to make ends meet and had trouble covering childcare costs on top of keeping up with her studies. A counselor at her school recommended Rochester Rehabilitation and Brishae soon began working with the Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) program.

"They were such a big help," Brishae said. "They helped with

childcare and gas cards, what I needed to be able to stay afloat while I got through nursing school." Brishae credited not only the financial assistance, but also the guidance she received from her counselor in the SWFI program that helped turn things around for her in her time of need. Now, Brishae is in a new home, has graduated nursing school, passed her exams, and is planning to enter a pre-med program.

"I'm in a way better place," Brishae said. "They have been the biggest help!"

To learn more about the SWFI program, or Rochester Rehabilitation's many other services including supported employment and mental health supports, please visit [RochesterRehab.org](https://www.RochesterRehab.org).



Finding Support, Building Connections

Barb Maryniak of Starbridge has worked with hundreds of individuals with disabilities during her career. The youth she supports are looking to get back on track with their career goals and usually need to complete certification courses and job training to get there. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic made that very challenging for everyone.

Still, Barb is proud to report that in the last year, a dozen young adults pushed through the obstacles and achieved their certificates for these careers: Certified Nurse's Aide, Home Health Aide, Personal Care Aide, Dental Assistant, Security Guards, and Hospital Transporter. Two individuals earned the liberal arts degrees needed to continue on their career paths.

Barb praises each and every one: "Despite the pandemic, these awesome young men and women donned their PPE, overcame their obstacles, and are now serving in the community!"

Project ESTEEM is a free service for youth ages 18-24 who want an education or career and need help with exploring career options; preparing for TASC, college, or occupational training; job search skills; managing money and more.

For more information, email Barbara Maryniak at bmaryniak@starbridgeinc.org or call at **585.224.7255**.





Al Sigl Tennis Benefit

Over 28 doubles teams in men's, women's, and mixed divisions joined us at the Tennis Club of Rochester, raising more than \$21,000 to benefit Al Sigl Member Agencies. The event kicked off with a Draw Party and Exhibition matches on Friday, August 13th, followed by a day full of great tennis on Saturday, August 14th. Heartfelt thanks to Joe Eduardo, Bill Martin, the Tennis Club of Rochester, our volunteer committee and loyal tennis community, for making this event such a great celebration of our work together.



Joe Eduardo and Tom O'Connor



Jim and Lisa Peacock

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Fine Tastings

On Wednesday, September 22nd, we celebrated our second hybrid Fine Tastings event as 100 guests joined us in-person at Locust Hill Country Club, with another 35 joining virtually. During dinner, guests enjoyed a presentation by Lorraine Hems and Terry Steele (pictured right) on the art of creating truly enjoyable pairings.

The event raised over \$50,000 to benefit Al Sigl Member Agencies. Heartfelt thanks to the Fine Tastings committee for their hard work and continued creativity, and each of our sponsors, guests, and volunteers for their generous support.



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Peter Mendick, Medhi Shemirani,
Dave Shaheen, Peter Kelderhouse Sr.



Howard Ward, Johnny Roland, Cliff Edington,
(seated) Barry Culhane, Vernon Blue, Tom O'Connor



Gary McCall, Mike Messenger,
Jason Messenger, Kyle McCall

52nd Annual Al Sigl Sports Classic Golf Tournament

Over 170 golfers, volunteers and friends joined us at Midvale Country Club on Monday, June 14th for a memorable day of golf benefiting Al Sigl Member Agencies. Many players stayed for a social hour where friends and family remembered one of the founding Sports Committee volunteers, Dr. Dan Caccamise, and celebrated the philanthropic legacy of the tournament. Heartfelt thanks to our Chair, John Brady, and the Sports Committee for helping to raise over \$114,000 to fund grants to each agency to help meet critical needs. Thank you to each of our wonderful sponsors, golfers, and volunteers for making this success possible.



Ashley and Kim Caccamise

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Save the Dates

53rd Annual
**Golf
Tournament**
Midvale
Country Club

MONDAY
**JUNE
13**

2022
**Tennis
Benefit**
Tennis Club
of Rochester

FRIDAY
**AUGUST
12
AND SATURDAY
13**



32nd Annual Al Sigi Community WalkAbout

On Sunday, October 24th, 350 individuals, families, and teams took part in the 32nd Annual Al Sigi Community WalkAbout at Eastview Mall. The collaborative event celebrated abilities and inclusion and raised over \$29,000 to benefit Al Sigi Member Agencies. Heartfelt thanks to each of our sponsors, generous friends, and many wonderful volunteers for walking and rolling with us!

Photos by Jolana Babacek

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Save the Date

Al Sigi
Community
WalkAbout

SUNDAY
OCTOBER
23

Eastview Mall



Why We Give



It's been said that "everybody knows somebody" who has been helped by an AI Sigl Member Agency.

Over the years, Kay and John Meisch have known several individuals with special needs and their families, such as the sister of a close friend. The sister, now in her 70s, was not expected to live past her teens due to oxygen deprivation at birth but thrived with the right supports. They also recall the son of a friend who took part in speech therapy services as a child, now a college graduate with 3 sons.

At a recent event, Kay and John took note of how AI Sigl Member Agencies help over 55,000 people each year and their families.

"We realized how the agencies had made a huge difference in people's lives and so we wanted to have a small part in helping others," says Kay.

Kay, a retired chemistry teacher, and John, retired CEO of Ridge Lumber, donate to several nonprofits. Friends of AI Sigl for nearly 30 years, their gifts have become more frequent as they learned more about AI Sigl's collaborative mission.

"We have always been amazed at how grateful AI Sigl has been for even small amounts," says Kay. "We have experienced giving to worthy organizations," she continues, "but we sometimes question if other organizations appreciate the small gifts, which has never been the case with AI Sigl."

This Fall, the Meisch's shared that they have made plans for AI Sigl Community to be included in their will. To learn more about this type of gift, please read on. ►

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 **Jim Spina** by phone at **585.442.4102** ext. **8943** or by email at **jspina@alsigl.org**



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Legacy Giving



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

Perhaps the easiest way to make a gift is to name AI Sigl in your will through a simple bequest.

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

Check with your financial advisor to find out how helping AI Sigl can also be a tax advantage to you or contact Debra Salmon at **585.442.4102** ext. **2718**.

Check Your Calendars

With your year-end support there will be even more stories of success at AI Sigl.

Here are some helpful reminders to assist you with your year-end giving.

Checks—If mailed, your envelope must be postmarked by December 31st.

Credit Card Donations—Make your secure gift at alsigl.org/donate