

Summer/Fall 2022

## 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



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## Howdy Neighbors

Sixty years! So much has changed and there is still so much to do.

It was an afternoon of blue skies and sunny smiles on July 30th, as AI Sigl volunteers, staff, and supporters from across the organization's history gathered to celebrate our work together.

Families with multiple generations who served as Board and committee volunteers shared memories over photos. Children and adults served by AI Sigl Member Agencies, their families and agency friends enjoyed performances on the lawn by community groups including the Arc of Monroe's Gregory Street Blues Band and Starbridge's Drumming Circle. AI Sigl's collaborative partnerships—SportsNet inclusive recreation, the LiveAbility Lab with RIT, Move to Include with WXXI, and more – were on hand with interactive activities highlighting our shared mission of fostering inclusion and celebrating abilities.

The event kicked off with proclamations by elected leaders recognizing AI Sigl's innovative organizational structure, proposed long before the ideas of collaboration and inclusion were widely accepted. Our Founding Board Chair, Justin Vigdor, spoke about how, in 1962, society was just beginning to recognize the need for community-based services for people with **disabilities**® and special needs.

He shared how the partnership was eventually named after newsman AI Sigl, who rallied his radio listeners to help wherever there was a need as AI's granddaughter, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren smiled in the audience.

Justin recalled how the project took years of planning and generous community support. In closing, he acknowledged the dozens of volunteers, parents and providers, or "renegades" as he called them, who made our dream home on Elmwood Avenue a reality.

We were incredibly grateful to have Justin with us at the event to mark this milestone, and each of our good friends, generous sponsors, and volunteers who helped make the day so memorable.



L-R, Justin Vigdor, Thomas O'Connor, John Horvath

For all that has been accomplished, there is still a growing need for programs and services for people with **disabilities**® and special needs. As we emerge from the pandemic that has affected all of us in so many different ways, we are constantly reminded of this, as well as the necessity of working together.

We lost a treasure recently who always responded to need in the community. John Horvath exemplified community service and a steadfast commitment to collaboration. An active, thoughtful and vocal volunteer for more than 50 years, John left an enduring impression on our hearts. I invite you to listen to John and Justin share their unique insights in a Storycorps discussion preserved at the Library of Congress. You can find a link on our website at [alsigl.org](http://alsigl.org).

Wishing you and your loved ones healthy and memorable times ahead as we look to the future together.

Sincerely,

Thomas O'Connor  
President



## Welcome, Nikisha!

The Board of Directors at Starbridge is delighted to announce the hiring of Nikisha Ridgeway, M.A., as the agency's new President/CEO. Late last year, Colin Garwood, Starbridge's first President/CEO, announced his intention to retire. After an extensive search, Nikisha emerged as the unanimous choice based on her leadership experience and skills, substantive knowledge of the field, and her visible passion and drive when serving individuals with **disabilities**®. With over 25 years in the human services field, Nikisha most recently served as Chief Operating Officer at Starbridge, where she oversaw all program operations and community partnerships for the agency.

Stephen Schwarz, Board member, praised the leadership of Colin Garwood, saying, "His legacy will live on as he will leave the agency in as strong a position as it has ever been to partner with individuals who have **disabilities**® and their families to help them achieve success in life. This community will miss him, but he will never be forgotten."

To learn more about Starbridge's many different programs and services, visit [starbridgeinc.org](http://starbridgeinc.org).



### Thank you to our sponsors:

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## Kirk's Transformation



Seven years ago, Kirk was living in a locked unit at Monroe Developmental Center. A troubled young man with developmental disabilities®, he had been labeled as “dangerous.” When the Center closed, staff at EPI met Kirk and knew he could thrive in the right environment with the right help. He moved into a residential group home with staff trained to care for and help support individuals with complex and challenging needs.

Kirk worked hard on self-control, independence, and self-reliance. His life began to turn around. Once verbally aggressive, he learned to control his emotions and adopted coping strategies. Today, Kirk volunteers at an animal hospital and is working towards getting a job. For the first time in his life, he has his own checking account. He enjoys the ability to make his own schedule, including spending time alone. He is also one of the founders and the first President of EPI's Self Advocacy group.

“I am now under my own control and I'm proud of the change in my attitude,” he says. To learn more about EPI's residential and other programs, visit [epiny.org](http://epiny.org).



## Staying Connected Through the Pandemic



This year, the Governor announced possible changes to help address a critical truck and bus driver shortage. Medical Motor Service (MMS) has been particularly affected by this issue. The waiting list of individuals seeking rides can total more than 50 people per day. Factors include career drivers

who retired during the pandemic and the closure of other providers. Donna Poccia, VP of Individual and Family Support Services at CP Rochester, notes, “Having reliable transportation options for individuals to be able to access their community, get to and from school and work, and have the ability to see friends and family, is incredibly important.” Throughout the pandemic, CP Rochester and MMS were able to help several individuals with jobs categorized as essential and who were required to report in person.

“Individuals repeatedly stressed how grateful they were that this service continued to operate,” says Donna, “as they would not have been able to fulfill their employment requirements without it.” To learn more about MMS, including about part-time driver opportunities, please visit [medicalmotors.org](http://medicalmotors.org).

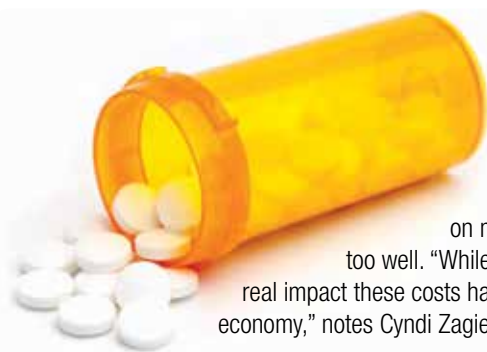


## Cost of Care

“I received this little tiny (DMT) pill that cost \$7,000, and I remember thinking, ‘This is like a diamond,’ in terms of value and size, and I thought how do people afford this?” says Eric, who lives with MS.

A new study has shown that individuals with MS spend an average of \$65,612 more on medical costs each year, underscoring what many people affected by MS know all too well. “While we've long known MS is a highly expensive disease, this study confirms the real impact these costs have on people with MS, their families and care partners—as well as the U.S. economy,” notes Cyndi Zagieboylo, the National MS Society's President and CEO.

Another recent survey by NMSS found that 40% of respondents were not taking their medication as prescribed because of the cost. If you are experiencing financial or employment challenges related to MS, the National MS Society can help connect you to the information, resources and support you need. Learn more at [nmlms.org/CostOfMS](http://nmlms.org/CostOfMS).



## JustOne-derful Friends

“I was not able to deliver 23 of your JustOne mailers this year, due to customers forwarding their mail for one reason or another. I have enclosed a check for \$23 for the possible dollar donations you may have missed out on.”—Tim

This note from Tim, a mail carrier, is one of many we received this Fe-blue-ary that made us smile. Heartfelt thanks to the thousands of friends and neighbors who made a gift or took part in our virtual Just One Night game show challenge to raise funds to benefit our work together.

# Member Agencies



## Raising Awareness About Hearing Health

The Monroe County Department of Public Health and Rochester Hearing & Speech Center (RHSC) have announced a year-long partnership to help educate residents about hearing protection, loss, and treatment. A new website, [HearingToday.org](http://HearingToday.org), includes a link to a five-minute online hearing screener, hearing aid information, frequently asked questions about hearing health, and other resources.

RHSC's Director of Audiology, Dr. Greg Horton, joined Dr. Michael Mendoza, Commissioner of the Monroe County Department of Public Health, in a PSA that began airing in May, the same month the agency marked the start of its 100th Anniversary. Of the effort, Bob Russell, RHSC president & CEO, says, "For a century, we have been privileged to help countless area residents. Good hearing contributes directly to building and maintaining interpersonal relationships and the ability for people to fully engage in the world around them. Thankfully, hearing health is now a community conversation."

To learn more about the nonprofit's 100th Anniversary, the partnership, or RHSC's programs serving people of all ages, visit [RHSC.org](http://RHSC.org).



## A Path Forward



When Annalee worked up the courage to pursue mental health treatment four years ago, she felt weighed down with hopelessness. She rarely left the house or spoke to anyone outside of her immediate family. Having lived with depression and social anxiety for most of her life,

she was beginning to "struggle to envision even the possibility of a future worth fighting for."

She turned to Rochester Rehabilitation for help. "As part of my support team, the Mental Health Clinic has changed my life," she says. "It's taken a lot of time and effort, but with their help I've slowly been able to find myself again. There are still good days and bad days, but through it all now I can see a path forward." She goes on to say, "As I continue to work on my mental health, I'm so grateful to have found people who have my back and who are cheering me on my way, whatever the future may bring."

To learn more about Rochester Rehabilitation's mental health services for adults, call at [585.271.2520](tel:585.271.2520) or visit [rochesterrehab.org](http://rochesterrehab.org).



## Access to Opportunities

Lilliana is a bright and imaginative three-year-old, who loves baseball, hockey and other sports. Last year she began taking part in the Dynamic Elite Athletics Cheer Abilities Team, Perfect Cut; she had so much fun she can't wait for the next season. Lilliana also started preschool at CP Rochester last year. She loves her teachers, friends, and therapists there. Diagnosed with periventricular leukomalacia and cerebral palsy at the age of one, she has seen immense growth from the services she receives.

It's important to her parents that Lilliana has the same opportunities that other children have. "That is one of the reasons why we were excited for Lilliana to serve as the honorary chair for this year's Ability Partners Foundation Run for Fun/Walk for Wellness at CP Rochester", says Katrina and Forrest.

"We want to raise awareness so that young kids like Lilliana can participate in the same sports as her peers," staying active and pursuing activities that she enjoys.

To learn more about CP Rochester's programs for people of all ages, including Pre-K and inclusive recreation programs, visit [cprochester.org](http://cprochester.org).





## Creative Solutions to Agency Needs



**“The helpful and professional manner of the AI Sigl Facilities team made everything painless. They saved the agency over \$20,000 in new equipment and ensured we could get in on time. Thank you again!”**

—Jeff Sinsebox, President, EPI

This year marked the completion of an important project helping to unite EPI's two Rochester offices in a single fully-renovated space on AI Sigl's Wolk Campus on South Avenue. While the move had been in discussion for over a year, the actual construction updates were completed in six months! In addition to creating a more spacious environment for staff, the move included technology updates and customized program spaces such as an expansive kitchen for life skills classes and a youth recreation room designed to foster interactive play.



Volunteer Frank Seiler gives feedback on a design idea



Jen, an AI Sigl volunteer, racing downhill in her adaptive sit-ski

## A Lift for Abilities

It was perfect weather for our first ever ski benefit at Hunt Hollow Ski Club in February! Our friends at Shared Ski Adventures adaptive ski program joined in as guests enjoyed a great afternoon on the slopes.

### Thank you to our sponsors:

- Bob & Amy August
- Greater Rochester Health Foundation
- LaBella Associates
- Paychex
- Ski Company



## Paddle Event Continues to Grow

An amazing 32 teams joined us in April for the 5th Annual AI Sigl Council Paddle Tournament. The event has become so popular that 2022 was the second year we hosted flights at two venues—Tennis Club of Rochester and Shadow Lake Golf & Racquet Club.

Thank you to our lead sponsor: Valley Propane & Fuels

## Innovation and Inclusion

This Spring, students and Faculty coaches from across RIT joined AI Sigl volunteers at IdeaLab to tackle eight access technology challenges. The hybrid format included on-campus and virtual options. Vaughn, who volunteered to share his experiences with a team working on how to make wheelchair anchors in vans easier to use, took part from sunny Florida. To suggest a future project idea, please contact Peggy at [pfortune@alsigl.org](mailto:pfortune@alsigl.org) or 585.442.4102 x8779.





## Golf Tournament Marks 53 Years of Giving

Over 160 golfers, friends and volunteers took part in this year's Sports Classic Golf Tournament at Midvale Country Club. Scott and Tristyn, who take part in SportsNet's adaptive recreation programs, joined the fun. SportsNet's adaptive golf cart, purchased by a 2017 Sports Committee grant, makes it possible for golfers of all abilities to enjoy a day out on the golf course with family and friends. Since the tournament's inception, the Al Sigl Sports Committee has raised over two million dollars to benefit Al Sigl Member Agency programs and services.



### Thank you to our Golf Sponsors

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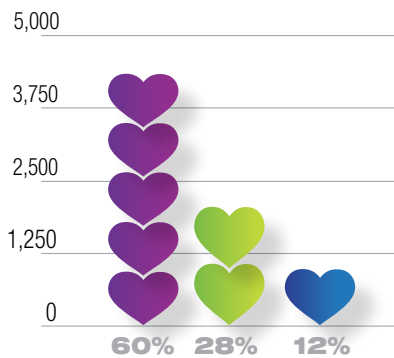
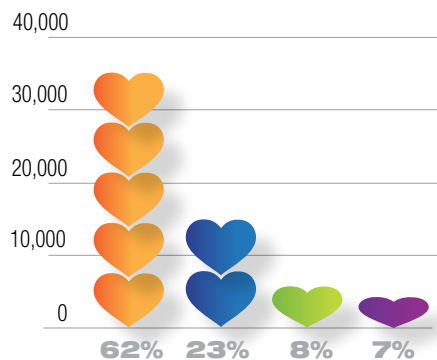
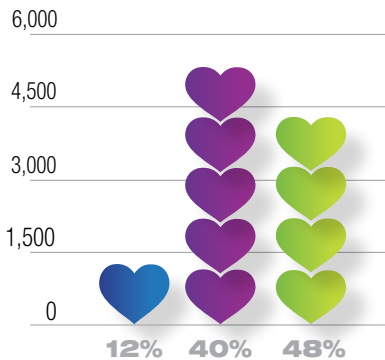
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# 2021 Annual Report



As we celebrate 60 Years of Achieving More Together, we are truly grateful to our caring friends, volunteers, donors, and staff for your support of our collaborative mission. **Thank you** for helping people of all abilities become more independent, achieve their goals and be more included in community life.



Consolidated Support and Revenue		In Millions
Contributions & Bequests		\$1,342
Revenues		\$5,322
Investment Earnings		\$4,426
Total		<b>\$11,090</b>
Expenses		\$7,536
Total Change in N/A		<b>\$3,554</b>

Assets	
Cash And Investments	\$35,650
Net Fixed Assets	\$13,448
Pledges & Crt	\$4,658
Other Assets	\$3,780
Total Assets	<b>\$57,536</b>

Liability	
Long-Term Debt	\$4,241
Accounts Payable & Accrued	\$1,984
Amounts Held/Designated	\$811
Total	<b>\$7,036</b>
Net Assets	\$50,500
Total Liability and Net Assets	<b>\$57,536</b>

## 2021 Board of Trustees

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- Thomas C. Wilmot, Jr.

## Legacy Giving

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 the AI Sigl Foundation 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**.

### 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 and we will send a card acknowledging your thoughtful gesture, mailed to the person you designate.

To make a gift, please include the name of the honoree and, if applicable, the occasion the gift is honoring. Also include the name and address of the honoree or family member/specified recipient if you wish us to notify them of your donation—you can also add a message.

Questions? Please contact Jim Spina at **585.442.4102** ext. **8943** or [jspina@alsigl.org](mailto:jspina@alsigl.org).



Visit [alsigl.org](http://alsigl.org) for full list of Honor & Memorial gifts.



# Save the Date



**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@aisigl.org**

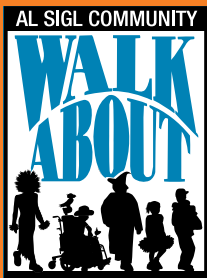


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## Volunteer Spotlight

Alek and Molly are both members of the AI Sigl Council, an energetic, young group of volunteers who organize fundraising events throughout the year to raise awareness about AI Sigl's collaborative mission. The group also hosts networking events to learn more about specific AI Sigl Member Agency programs and community partnerships and how they make a difference across the region.

Alek had learned of the Council several years ago from a co-worker who was inviting colleagues to join him at WalkAbout for a few hours of inclusive, family-friendly fun.

Molly was invited by a friend to help with Lilac Festival parking. That's where she heard about and volunteered to help with that year's Golf Tournament.

Ever since, the pair has volunteered at nearly every AI Sigl event, often together. From professional events, such as fielding questions at a Young Professionals volunteer fair or serving signature blue cocktails at our Just One Night guest bartending fundraiser, to rolling up their sleeves to help paint a banner or cover the bubble station at our 60th Anniversary Celebration, they are always ready to help wherever needed.

"Being a part of the Council means taking action and being a part of something bigger than yourself," says Molly. "Truly, I enjoy being a part of the Council because of the people I have met and get the chance to be with, all while working towards making a difference."

Alek agrees, adding, "I'm active on the Council because I like the AI Sigl Community, and I like what it represents. My participation, ideas, and contributions are valued, and I know that it's all going towards supporting this community."

To learn more about the AI Sigl Council or becoming an event volunteer, please contact Christine Coletti at **585.442.4102 ext. 8944** or **ccoletti@aisigl.org**.



**"I volunteer with AI Sigl because it is important to have, give and receive support within the communities you live in, no matter how big or small."**

– Molly

