

Fall 2024

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



A new exhibition space for AI Sigl's **LiveABILITY Lab**

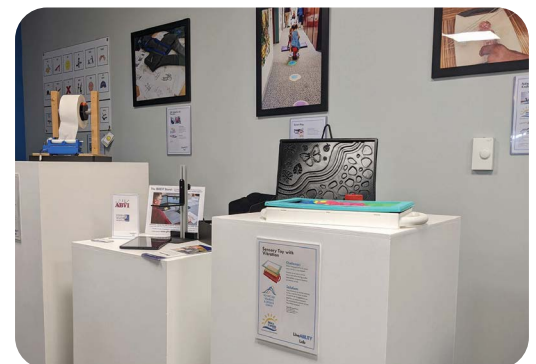
On August 14th, we welcomed project volunteers and community partners to the opening of a new exhibition space for AI Sigl's LiveABILITY Lab. Located next to the ArcDeli café at our Golisano Campus on Elmwood Avenue, the space is open to the public during café hours.

"The event marked an exciting evolution in AI Sigl's collaboration with Rochester Institute of Technology," notes Dr. Dan Phillips, RIT's Faculty Associate for Effective Access Technology. For years, people of all ages and abilities taking part in AI Sigl Member Agency programs have identified access technology project ideas focused on barriers to inclusion. In addition to suggesting projects, they also meet with interdisciplinary teams from RIT to give feedback on design solutions in progress or test prototypes.

On display are several prototypes, ranging from sensory toys to an automatic toilet paper dispenser, to a modular kitchen design with work stations movable to different heights, and more. Community volunteers from organizations including Endless Highway and the Rochester Spinal Association have often joined in to help refine and test designs.

"These ideas start as challenges and emerge as solutions," says Tom O'Connor, President of AI Sigl Community of Agencies. "This effort began when AI Sigl Board Member, the late Dr. Barry Culhane, and then President Dan Meyers, envisioned an innovative partnership between AI Sigl and RIT that continues to inspire students, faculty and community volunteers today."

He continues, "Our first two RIT co-op students spent a semester visiting our Member Agencies to gather project ideas. They both said that the experience was life-changing; one even helped form a start-up that is now a commercial success, ThermApparel. So we thought every co-op would be similar, yet over a decade later we have hundreds of ideas, projects and prototypes, many ready for commercial development. Our next challenge is to find stewards for projects ready for this new phase, and to develop more pathways to partnership, so our work together can have an even greater impact."





Howdy Neighbors

As Fall wraps us in its warm colors and we head into our favorite seasonal activities, I want to take a moment to reflect about how AI Sigl and our Member Agencies recently strengthened our community. This summer has been exceptionally busy as we've prepared new educational spaces, modernized facilities, and enhanced amenities to better serve our region during these challenging times.

Each day brings reminders of ongoing needs, like greater access to mental health services, and our understanding of these challenges drives our urgency to act. Your support of AI Sigl makes a significant difference, enabling individuals to access transportation to critical resources, connect with workforce development opportunities and to remain in their homes.

AI Sigl is recognized nationally for our innovation and collaboration, yet our impact is local. Your generosity empowers us to innovate and that support stays within our Greater Rochester area, directly benefiting our Member Agencies.

We succeed thanks to our dedicated volunteers, and I truly appreciate their involvement. On the cover of this issue is one example of how our volunteers help strengthen our work together. The AI Sigl LiveAbility Lab is a testament to our commitment to developing practical solutions for individuals in our community, and I'm excited about the prototypes we're creating.

You will read more in this issue about workforce development initiatives and the ongoing pursuit of employment opportunities—key aspects of our mission to help individuals achieve independence and live fulfilling lives.

Recently, we gathered with agency friends, leadership, and volunteers for one of our annual traditions—a picnic at our Wolk Campus. A special thank you to the Theodore and Cashmere Mendick Foundation for their support—it's always a joy to conclude the summer with Executive Committee member Howard Ward's beloved BBQ, ice cream and friends.

As we embrace the traditions of Fall, let's celebrate the connections we share. It's a blessing to gather, reflect, and express gratitude for those who support our mission. Thank You for All You Do!

Warm wishes,

Thomas O'Connor
President

Thank You

B. Thomas Golisano and the Golisano Foundation have truly transformed Rochester and beyond. At AI Sigl, we've experienced firsthand the impact of Mr. Golisano's generosity through numerous transformational gifts that have enabled our collaborative to adapt and respond to the community's most urgent needs. We are incredibly grateful for the support extended not only to AI Sigl agencies but also to many nonprofits dedicated to helping individuals with special needs and their families. This commitment to empowering others has made a lasting difference in our community.

Thank you, Tom!

AI Sigl Welcomes New Staff

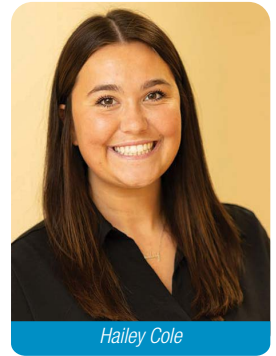


Maria Nicchitta

Since our last issue, Maria Nicchitta joined our team as Executive Assistant to the President and Brendon Boupachay began serving as Foundation Coordinator. The Foundation team also welcomed Hailey Cole as Manager of Fundraising Events and Volunteer Engagement.



Brendon Boupachay



Hailey Cole

Facilities Spotlight

This year, Mary Cariola Center and AI Sigl renewed our commitment with a ten-year lease continuation. With assistance from Mary Cariola, who qualified for significant funding through a competitive Federal grant for schools, we partnered to upgrade HVAC needs at our Golisano Campus at Elmwood.



Benefits of an Inclusive Workplace

1.6
TIMES MORE REVENUE

2 TIMES MORE ECONOMIC PROFIT

Impact reported, on average, by companies identified as leaders in disability inclusion vs. their counterparts.

22%
VERSUS
65%

the employment rate for people with disabilities is only one third of the employment rate for the general population; regardless of education level

—U.S. Department of Labor



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, when we celebrate both the contributions and also the untapped potential of people with disabilities and special needs in the workplace.

Several AI Sigi Member Agencies offer a variety of supports for people with special needs seeking to join, or rejoin, the workforce. Many provide resources to businesses seeking to learn how to get started.

Staffing Continues to Impact Nonprofits

Staffing is a major challenge for home-and community-based care providers. A 2023 survey by ANCOR found that nearly 95% of providers who responded experienced “moderate or severe” staffing shortages. Nearly 80% shared that they had to stop accepting new client referrals. The trends were especially prevalent for organizations serving individuals with disabilities and special needs.

You Can Help

You can help spread the word about employment opportunities. To find links to related Member Agency programs and also current job openings, visit alsigl.org/careers.

This spotlight sponsored by The M&T Charitable Foundation |

Save the Date

on Dialogue
Disability

THE HERMAN & MARGARET SCHWARTZ COMMUNITY SERIES

Tune in to WXXI **January 2025** 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.



Member Agencies



Right at Home

When Jeffrey (JJ) and his family started looking for an Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) they approached CP Rochester for a visit. The first house they toured was too small for JJ's liking. However, CP Rochester had another opening in a bigger, more populated house. With his family in tow, JJ toured Benedict House and stayed for dinner swapping stories with the residents. By the time he got home, he went right to his room and began packing, his sister remembered. The

space felt to JJ like a big happy family. He had found his niche, his own space, his home.

Now, JJ has been a resident for six years and wouldn't change a thing. JJ's favorite things about living at Benedict are the variety of meals, the friends he lives with, the staff he spends time with, and creating his own rules in every game of Uno. To learn more about CP Rochester's residential or other programs for adults and children, please call **585.334.6000** or visit cprochester.org.



Growing Independence

Rosie is a happy, social little girl who loves music, ice cream, and school. And although life has had its share of challenges, she continues to rise to the occasion and overcome obstacles. To help foster her independence, her parents Jon and Theresa have made several accessibility modifications to their split-level Ranch home. Yet, as Rosie has grown, it's become increasingly difficult to help her move from one level to another. They researched options, including a vertical platform lift (VPL). Everything fell into place when they

were referred to EPI's Home Modification Program. Now Rosie can move about independently.

"We are so thankful for EPI, as well as Rosie's team of providers, who supported us every step of the way," states Jon. Adds Theresa, "She's smart and her brain is growing and developing because she is more independent in her home with her siblings." For more information about EPI's Environmental Modification services, please call **585.442.4430** or email info@epiny.org.



Partnerships Fuel Purpose

Medical Motor Service (MMS) operates a fleet of 85 vans, buses, and cars to help transport more than 4,088 area residents who are unable to use traditional transit services. Thanks to a full-service onsite maintenance garage, which consistently receives top safety accolades from New York State, MMS vehicles are kept in top condition and often log over 450,000 miles. However, due to the 232,000 trips provided annually, they are continuously adding to their fleet as vehicles age and are retired from service.

This year, Empowering People's Independence (EPI), sold MMS ten used vehicles, instead of trading them in, to help with this effort. Through partnerships with other AI Sigi Member Agencies, MMS can continue innovative programs that address the need for

specialized transportation for people of all ages, including children's services, shopping shuttles, and elder care services. To learn more about MMS, please visit mmsnys.org.



Did You Know?

- According to the CDC, more than 1 in 4 adults in the US report having a disability.
- Our collaborative serves over 55,000 children and adults each year on our 6 campuses.
- Our agencies serve people of all ages—from birth to programs for seniors—even providing financial planning services for beneficiaries.
- In philanthropy, this 'force multiplier' approach amplifies the impact of individual donations.

We are so grateful for the many friends each year who make a gift in support of our work together to make stories like the ones on these pages possible. When you make a gift to AI Sigi Community, your donation stays local and works together to help people of all abilities live full, independent lives in the community.

Choose Your Adventure

“No one can or should tell us what we can and cannot do. If you want to go to the other end of the world and experience something magical and different, you most likely can. Yes, it will take more work...but you will never forget the experience.”

Jan, living with MS for over 20 years, is an advocate for travel. In the face of the grandeur of the world, she says, the challenges of MS feel small. “I didn’t recall seeing many travelers with canes,



walkers or wheelchairs in the destinations I loved,” she says, but by asking for accommodations and being flexible, she has been able to travel the world. “I won’t be disingenuous and say it’s always easy,” Jan says, but adds the experience makes it that much more worth it. “We are stronger than we think, because we have to be.” To learn more about NMSS, and programs that help individuals living with MS find resources, services and support, visit nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NYR.



Finding Personalized Support

Growing up, Daiy faced many obstacles and often lived in unsafe spaces. She felt unwanted by her family after the passing of her mother and aunt, and attempted to take her own life on numerous occasions. After surviving abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder following a hospital stay, and being unexpectedly fired from her dream job, Daiy began to work on loving herself and accepting her trauma through working with Rochester Rehabilitation’s Ventures PROS.

“Trust me when I say that this work was not done in a couple of days. It’s taken quite a few years and more

than a couple million tears. Above all else love yourself and that love for self will transfer to everyone else,” Daiy said.

PROS stands for ‘personalized recovery oriented services’ to help individuals overcome mental health challenges. PROS participants like Daiy create a plan for recovery and identify goals to work toward. Also provided are on-site clinical services with a therapist and psychiatrist. To learn more, or find resources for someone who is struggling, please call **585.256.3430 x1017** or visit rochesterrehab.org.



Ready for Success



The need for Speech Language Therapy for children under 5 years old is often overlooked, and it’s sometimes not until preschool or later that children are identified as needing this service. However, this age

is when they are most ready to learn language and begin to express their wants and needs, notes Katie Antinoro, Manager of Preschool Special Education Evaluations at Rochester Hearing & Speech Center.

According to Antinoro, “in addition to being an appropriate time for their brain development, this is when children need to reach expected communication milestones to prepare for preschool and kindergarten.” While the work is challenging, it’s rewarding to witness memorable moments, like when one of her young learners says “mommy” or “daddy” for the first time. To learn more about how RHSC helps foster “Communication for Life” for thousands of children and adults each year, please call **585.271.0680** or visit rhsc.org.



Pursuing Goals

Joe wants others to know that dreams are lived, not just imagined. When he shares his experience with Self-Direction with other young people considering the program, the subject often turns to dreams for the future.

Joe and his mother Gretchen have partnered with Starbridge for over 17 years. After high school, Joe used Self-Direction to help his transition to adulthood. He set goals and created a budget to support his growing independence. He began auditing classes at Genesee Community



College and hired Tara to provide support in the community, with employment and daily life skills. Through his love of photography, his work with the historical society, and his volunteerism, Joe has made many friends in the community. Along with the support of his family, he offers this advice to others: start with small goals, embrace community connections, and believe in limitless potential. To learn more about the Self-Direction program at Starbridge, please call **585.546.1700** or visit starbridgeinc.org.



2023 Annual Report

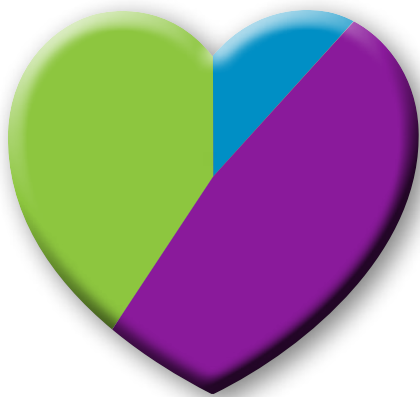


Through the warm and generous support of our friends, volunteers, donors, and staff we are able to ensure all that use AI Sigl Community spaces do so in a safe and accessible environment.

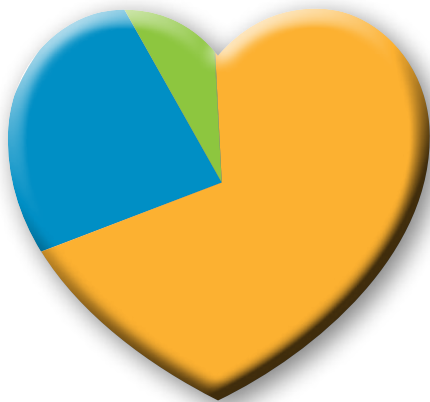
This year AI Sigl has helped to strengthen transportation offerings, grow collaboration in our education sector to better meet changing needs, invested in the modernization of an aging HVAC system, and much more to ensure our Member Agencies, Affiliates, and neighbors thrive.

Your contribution is appreciated. Each gift goes to work right here in Rochester to help **55,000 children** and adults with special needs accessing services throughout our **6 campuses** and **20 buildings**.

Thank you for helping us **Achieve More Together**.



Consolidated Support and Revenue		In Millions
Contributions & Bequests		\$1,300
Revenues		\$5,320
Investment Earnings		\$4,648
Total		\$11,268
Expenses		(\$7,880)
Total Change in N/A		\$3,388



Assets		
Cash And Investments		\$37,675
Net Fixed Assets		\$12,330
Other Assets		\$3,900
Total Assets		\$53,905



Liability		
Long-Term Debt		\$2,796
Accounts Payable & Accrued		\$2,409
Amounts Held/Designated		\$714
Total		\$5,919
Net Assets		\$47,986
Total Liability and Net Assets		\$53,905

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A Summer Tradition

Each summer, we bring together agencies, staff, leadership, and families at our Wolk Campus for an annual picnic. For over a decade, volunteer and Executive Committee member Howard Ward has prepared his delicious BBQ ribs. Thank you to Howard, and the Theodore and Cashmere Mendick Foundation, for making this event possible each year.

Celebrating Judy

In April, Al Sigl staff, friends, and family gathered to celebrate and honor Judy Meyer, whose years of dedicated service made her a pillar of our organization. While we deeply miss her, we wish Judy all the best in this exciting new chapter of her life.



Justin Vigdor Distinguished Service Award

Earlier this year, we unveiled our inaugural Justin Vigdor Distinguished Service Award, presented to Justin Vigdor and Judy Meyer. The award recognizes members of the Al Sigl Community of Agencies family who have demonstrated excellence and devotion to the advancement of our mission and a commitment to creating a more inclusive community for people of all abilities.

Justin was recognized as a founder of our collaborative and for more than 60 years of passionate leadership. Judy retired in March after nearly 44 years of exemplary service. It was a thrill to have them share a milestone spotlight together.



Thank you to our lead sponsor

THEODORE & CASHMERE MENDICK FOUNDATION



55th Annual Al Sigl Sports Classic Golf Tournament

Nearly 150 friends joined us at Midvale Country Club for the 55th Annual Sports Classic Golf Tournament. We are grateful to Sports Committee Chair Pat DiLucia and our entire volunteer committee for all of their support.

Thank you to our lead sponsors

Title Sponsor

THEODORE & CASHMERE MENDICK FOUNDATION

Gold

The Dolomite Group

Silver

Alesco Advisors
Catenary Construction
College Bound Sealers
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Pike Construction Services
Spoleta Construction
Upstate Systems
URMC Golisano Children's Hospital
Villager Construction
Bronze
SWBR
Upstate Roofing & Painting, Inc.



Al Sigl Tennis Benefit

This year's two-day event at Tennis Club of Rochester kicked off with 24 round robin players on Friday evening. Once again, Saturday's 72-person team tournament sold out! Many thanks to Deanna Kernan, Tennis Club of Rochester, and TCR staff for their continued generous support of this event.

Thank you to our lead sponsors

Tennis Club of Rochester, Randy Schuster & Coordinated Plan, Pittsford Federal Credit Union, Jim & Lisa Peacock Tom Adamski & Carmen Reyes-Adamski





A Lift for Abilities

Thank you to our lead sponsors

Thank you to the many good friends who joined us at Hunt Hollow for our 3rd Annual Ski Benefit. It was a great day to hit the slopes to support individuals of all abilities!

- Bob August
- C.P. Ward, Inc.
- LaBella Associates
- Villager Construction
- Woods Oviatt Gilman



Save the Dates

56th Annual Golf Tournament
Midvale Country Club

MONDAY
JUNE 9th
2025

Tennis Benefit

Tennis Club of Rochester
COMING IN **AUGUST**
2025



Bright Lights



Fine Tastings
for AI Sigi Community

20th Anniversary of Fine Tastings

You could feel the energy in the room as over 200 friends gathered to celebrate two decades of sipping and sampling to raise funds for AI Sigi Member Agencies while raising awareness about our collaborative mission. Heartfelt thanks to Honorary Chair Linda Garvey, and to each of our friends who joined us at Monroe Golf Club, to mark this milestone together.

**Thank you to our
lead sponsors**

Title Sponsor

THEODORE & CASHMERE
MENDICK FOUNDATION

Diamond

Wegmans

Gold

Starbridge

Silver

Rochester's Cornerstone Group

WXXI/Move To Include

Sandy & Kevin Wehner
in loving memory of
Edward & Emma Hayes



“I volunteer because I know young people can make a difference in our community.”
—Greece Athena Student



Greece Athena, National Junior Honor Society, 2023



Bishop Kearney IgKnights, 2022

Many Ways to Volunteer

Each October, we are thrilled to have students from local middle schools, high schools, and colleges join us for the AI Sigl Community WalkAbout at Eastview Mall. Groups like the Greece Athena National Junior Honor Society and Bishop Kearney's robotics team lead family-friendly games and demonstrations.

Know a youth group or organization interested in getting involved? Schools and community groups can join us for events like WalkAbout or host school-based awareness efforts like the JustOne® Day School Challenge. For an events calendar, or to suggest an activity, please contact Christine at [585.442.4102](tel:585.442.4102) x8944 or ccoletti@alsigl.org.



Volunteers from CP Rochester's Transition Room



AI Sigl Council Volunteers

A Volunteer Project Out of This World

A generous grant funded several LiveAbility Lab volunteer activities earlier this year, with the goal of designing, and then also making, specialized items to be given to AI Sigl Member Agencies for use in program spaces. To get the project started, Member Agency program staff met with LiveAbility Lab volunteers to discuss program needs, paying particular attention to items not typically funded via other means.

Sensory items rose to the top of the list, due to their popularity across all age groups. Together staff and volunteers worked to refine a series of solar-system themed sensory fidgets. Next, volunteer groups, including friends from CP Rochester and the AI Sigl Council, used custom molds to help make items for distribution to classrooms, therapy suites, and other program spaces. Friends from the CP Rochester Woodworking Shop designed a mobile sensory board as part of the project and an artist taking part in Rochester Rehabilitation's Ventures PROS program created a space-themed motif for the boards.



Many Ways to Give

You can make an impact by supporting the AI Sigl Foundation. Dedicated friends, like you, help sustain our work together.

- Honor someone special—a gift in honor or memory of a friend or loved one is a thoughtful tribute.
- Build a lasting impact through a charitable gift annuity, life insurance beneficiary, or name AI Sigl Community in your will.
- Sponsor an AI Sigl event and showcase your support.

If you have already included AI Sigl in your plans, let us know so we can welcome you as a member of the AI Sigl Society, created to honor generous friends who intend to make a lasting impact. Check with your financial advisor to discuss potential tax advantages or contact Brenda Geglia at [585.442.4102](tel:585.442.4102) x2718 or bgeglia@alsigl.org.

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 Megan by phone at [585.442.4102](tel:585.442.4102) x8948 or by email at msassenhausen@alsigl.org.



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alsigl.org

Making an Impact All Year Long



Elma Borcilo-King joined the AI Sigl Board of Governors in 2022. A frequent event volunteer, she is willing to help wherever needed, and has shared her time in roles as varied as special projects funding liaison, to helping with Lilac Festival parking, to serving as a guest bartender at JustOne®

Night, to bringing smiles to guests of all ages at the face-painting station at our 60th Anniversary picnic celebration. Most recently, Elma joined the group of AI Sigl donors who have chosen to make an ongoing monthly contribution via a secure, automatic payment.

“Every day AI Sigl Member Agencies are serving the needs of people right here in our community. I chose to give monthly to provide consistent support all year. It was easy to set up online, fits into my budget, and I know the impact will grow throughout the year.”

To join Elma by making a recurring monthly gift, or to learn more about how your gifts make a difference, please visit alsigl.org/donate.



Join the Fun!

35th Annual AI Sigl
Community WalkAbout

October 20th
inside Eastview Mall

Registration Begins: 8:30AM
Walk starts: 9AM
Costume Contest: 10AM

Thank you to our lead sponsors to date

Willmorite; Eastview Mall; PwC; News 8 WROC