

Spring 2026

Achieving More Together

CP Rochester
 Empowering People's Independence (EPI)
 Medical Motor Service
 National MS Society Upstate New York
 Rochester Hearing and Speech Center
 Rochester Rehabilitation Center
 Starbridge

“I've grown up being involved in different aspects of the disability community. At AI Sigl, it's exciting to see so many people all working together to improve the lives of people with disabilities.”

- Jenna

The Heart of our Mission

This Spring, we are celebrating the many ways that volunteers have helped shape and strengthen our work together. Though our volunteers may wear many different hats, they share our commitment to providing welcoming spaces and supports for people with special needs to thrive and be more fully included.

Many have also encouraged friends and family to volunteer. It was Mary Richardson's role as Starbridge's Member Agency representative on AI Sigl's Board of Governors, that inspired her daughter, Jenna Vamvakias, to join the AI Sigl Council for young professionals.

“I've been involved with AI Sigl in many ways over the years, first as a parent to my son, Dylan, who has Down syndrome,” said Mary. “Dylan loved WalkAbout when he was younger. Then a few years ago, at another AI Sigl event, my son met Tom, the head of the organization, and they really connected over music,” Mary added. “Dylan loves the band Green Day. I had known that Tom was helping to manifest all these great things for AI Sigl and for Rochester, but to see him singing Green Day songs with my son really helped me understand him, and the organization, in a new way.”

Said Jenna, “I'm not quite at a place in my career to serve on a Board, but the Council, it's attainable.” She added, “I can volunteer and there's also a social aspect. We help organize fundraising events and visit the different agencies to learn more about their programs. We also attend local events.”

Asked about her favorite memory as a volunteer, Mary shared, “Now that Dylan is older, he joins us at all the AI Sigl events. Recently, Jenna was one of the volunteer bartenders raising funds at JustOne® Night,” she added, with a laugh, “For her brother to go up to the bar and order a drink from Jenna and us all spend time together, it brings everything around full circle. It's been a fun little bonding experience.”

Mary went on to say, “Sometimes people worry that volunteering will be a big commitment. So you want to wait until you feel like you have free time. But you can tailor the experience—maybe you could be on a committee, or just help with one event.” ♥



(L-R) Mary, Dylan, Jenna, and Peter (below) Jenna volunteering



“The whole concept of AI Sigl in terms of what you do for Rochester is pretty phenomenal-- all the nonprofits that you reach and what you do can do for them.”

- Mary



Howdy Neighbors

I love the energy that comes with Spring—the promise of renewal and possibility. That same energy is reflected in our volunteers, individuals whose passion and commitment help our community continue to grow and thrive. Like many others, I first connected with AI Sigl as a volunteer. As I learned more

about AI Sigl, I didn't just fall in love with the mission—I found that I loved the work itself and how it becomes part of who you aspire to be.

I'm always humbled by our volunteers' depth of knowledge and their willingness to share their time—and their hearts—to help AI Sigl. The expertise they provide is truly unmatched. Whether helping to plan a fundraising event, raising awareness through our Young Professionals group, or serving on our Governance Committee, there are many ways to get involved. Enjoy golf, tennis, or pickleball? Help us plan our next tournament. Enjoy fine food, wine, and spirits? Join us as we celebrate local flavors each September at Fine Tastings. Interested in connecting with others in the same field, such as Finance or Facility Management? We'd love to hear from you.

Another wonderful aspect of volunteering is the friendships that develop along the way. Some last a lifetime and begin to feel like family. I'm often reminded of the families who share a multi-generational legacy of volunteering. One example is Alex Whitaker, who—more than 30 years after his father, David, served as chair of AI Sigl's board—is now serving in that same role. David's legacy shines on through Alex and the lessons passed from one generation to the next.

I recently attended funeral services for our longtime friend, Joan Feinbloom, whose commitment to our community extended well beyond her generous support of AI Sigl. Joan and her husband, Harold, were deeply involved with many nonprofit organizations across our region. Their son, Stephen, shared stories of Joan filled with love—and a bit of humor. He noted how that day also marked the anniversary of the release of *Let It Be* by The Beatles, a song Sir Paul McCartney wrote after dreaming about his mother, Mary. The song's message of comfort and grace felt like a quiet reminder of the legacy of people like Joan.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of organizations like AI Sigl. Their ideas, spirit, and generosity make everything we do possible—and they remind us that when people come together with a shared purpose, remarkable things can happen.

Warm wishes,

Thomas O'Connor
President

Sigl News



Building Dialogue

As part of January's *Dialogue on Disability: The Herman & Margaret Schwartz Community Series* week, *Move To Include* launched a new podcast series. Now available on all streaming

platforms, the series explores education, employment, housing, transportation, and more—all centered on the experiences of people with disabilities and special needs. Visit WXXI.org to learn more.



Festival of Inclusion

We loved connecting with individuals and families at the Festival of Inclusion at the Golisano Training Center at Nazareth in March. At the free event, attendees could learn more about over 100 nonprofits while enjoying

interactive games and other activities. AI Sigl has been a proud participant in the Festival since it was founded in 2020.



Growing Connections

New this year, AI Sigl's Garden Club offers a hands-on way to get involved while helping to keep our campuses vibrant and welcoming.

Anyone can attend, from long-time gardeners to those who are just getting started. Monthly meetings will include seasonal activities, crafts, and presentations from guest speakers. Helping to kick off the series, in March a Cornell Master Gardener spoke about how to incorporate herbs into sensory gardens.

"It's a fun way to learn, volunteer, and connect," says Christine Coletti, AI Sigl's Chief of Staff. "I think we're growing something special."

To learn more, visit alsigl.org/garden or email Christine at ccoletti@alsigl.org to RSVP for an upcoming meeting.

Bright Lights

Fine Flavors. Local Impact.



"I look forward to this event each year," says Tammy Mason, a long-time Al Sigl volunteer and Fine Tastings Committee Chair. "I love the variety of drinks and dishes."

In 2025, more than 200 guests, volunteers, Tasting Partners, and generous sponsors raised over \$63,000. Ready to savor signature flavors from local restaurants, wineries, and breweries?

Save the date for **Thursday, September 24th** at Monroe Golf Club. Learn more at alsigl.org/tastings.

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Rochester's Cornerstone Group

Fine Tastings
for Al Sigl Community



Celebrating Together



Nearly 40 organizations and volunteer groups joined friends of all ages and abilities from across the community at last year's WalkAbout.

Afterward, Christine, director of the National Jr. Honor Society

at Greece Athena High School, shared, "It was a wonderful morning; our students are always happy to share the smiles, and the joy, at WalkAbout. I absolutely LOVE this event." To learn more about how your club or group can add to the fun as part of this year's event, coming up on **Sunday, October 18th**, inside Eastview Mall, visit alsigl.org/walkabout.



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Mission Matters



JUST ONE

We kicked off the month of Fe-blue-ary at Fairport Brewing on University Avenue as volunteers from the Al Sigl Council, Foundation, Board of Governors and Board of Trustees competed as guest bartenders to raise the most tips at JustOne® Night.

Brad Jamison (above, right), a member of the Al Sigl Council since 2021, likes the welcoming atmosphere. "Anyone can join in. I bring friends and family," he says. "It's been easy to get people to rally behind the cause."

For 36 years, our community has rallied together through JustOne®, turning small actions into meaningful, lasting change. We are grateful to all who join in by attending an event, volunteering, or donating. Thank you for making our community stronger, together!

Accessible Fun for All



In addition to a beautiful day on the slopes and Après Ski refreshments at Hunt Hollow, guests at Al Sigl's February ski benefit could learn about adaptive ski programs from Tyler Pitner of SportsNet inclusive recreation.

This year marked the 5th anniversary of the event, which raises funds and helps new friends learn more about Al Sigl.



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to our lead
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Special Thanks to
Hunt Hollow

Your Gift Creates a Lasting Impact

Thanks to your support of AI Sigl Community, individuals with special needs:

- Have access to dependable services that foster independence
- Feel supported and included
- Are strengthened by a caring community

A monthly gift creates meaningful change all year long.

A single gift helps us *Achieve More Together*. Give today to further our mission.



To learn more about other ways to give contact **Brenda Gaglia** at **585.442.4102 x2718** or **bgeglio@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 at **585.442.4102 x8948** or **msassenhausen@alsigl.org**.



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Save the Date



AI Sigl Sports Classic Golf Tournament

Midvale Country Club
Monday, June 8th



AI Sigl Tennis Benefit

Tennis Club of Rochester
August 7th-8th



Fine Tastings for AI Sigl Community

Monroe Golf Club
Thursday, September 24th



AI Sigl Community WalkAbout

Inside Eastview Mall
Sunday, October 18th



Volunteer Spotlight "Part of Something Bigger"

"I first became connected with the AI Sigl Council through a colleague that is on the Board. She connected me with the Council to help with parking at the Lilac Festival. From there, I started to attend the monthly meetings and immediately felt welcomed by the other members. Shortly after that, we had lunch with Medical Motors Service which was an extremely rewarding experience."

"Being on Council has provided me with the chance to make a direct, human impact by promoting dignity, inclusion, and independence. It is a constant reminder that small acts of service can significantly improve someone's quality of life. For new volunteers, it helps you be part of something bigger, connecting your time and effort to a shared mission that creates lasting impact, for both individuals and for our community as a whole."



- *Maggie Doran*