Al Sigl Community of Agencies

broadcast

Fall 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

Changing the Landscape

Earlier this year, a grant from the Greece Rotary Club helped transform a portion of our Golisano Campus at Elmwood into a beautiful Sensory Garden. Al Sigl's Facilities and Grounds Staff teamed up with volunteers from our new Garden Club for the project. Together, they spent many hours helping to prepare the space, selecting plant varieties, and tending to the new growth.

Sensory gardens are special because they invite people to experience nature in different ways; through color, texture, scent, sound, and movement. They can provide opportunities for exploration, connection, and moments of calm, while creating an outdoor space to be enjoyed by all. We are grateful to the many friends and neighbors who helped make the project a reality.

The Garden is just one example of change throughout our campuses this year.

Across the Al Sigl Community, we made significant investments in the spaces, infrastructure, and technology that help our nonprofit partners do what they do best: serve people.

Several projects created updated learning environments for programs providing classroom-based and early intervention services. These improvements support not only learning, but also social development and specialized services such as physical and speech therapy. We also tackled important infrastructure projects—from new roofs and asphalt to improved entrances with updated access and safety technology—all designed to make our shared spaces more welcoming, comfortable, accessible, and secure.

The transformation of our Sensory Garden is another wonderful example of what can happen when we thoughtfully shape a space around the people who will experience it.

These investments matter because the spaces we share make important work possible. ♥

One of the 10 new classroom spaces

(above) One of the recent paving projects; (below) the new Sensory Garden

Howdy Neighbors

A recent visit to our new Sensory Garden reminded me how much a space can change with the help of many hands and many hearts.

In uncertain times, it can be easy to wonder how much difference one person can make. Yet at Al Sigl, we know what is possible when people come together. More than six decades ago, families, providers, volunteers, and supporters created a new way for nonprofits serving people with special needs to *Achieve More Together*.

Today, that spirit of collaboration continues to guide us. Al Sigl is in a unique position to help sustain and strengthen the Member Agencies that call our campuses home. We understand the challenges facing the children and adults who rely on these organizations—and the challenges our nonprofit partners face as they work to meet growing and changing needs. One of the most important things we can do right now is listen.

Our work has never been simply about buildings or campuses. It is about people. It's about how we help our partners focus on the individuals that they serve while we care for the spaces where the programs take place, the technology that helps their staff accomplish more, and the safety and accessibility of the environments we all share.

Our work is also about asking questions, listening to what is needed, and finding ways to improve outcomes. It is about exploring how to expand access and opportunity for people with disabilities and special needs and their families.

Somehow, this year has seemed to move a little faster than those of the past. Looking back, it is remarkable how much we accomplished together.

I always say the real strength of Al Sigl is what happens within and across those spaces: people and organizations sharing ideas, solving problems, and working together to make our community stronger.

That shared commitment—to our spaces, to one another, and most importantly, to the people we collectively serve—is what makes our mission and our work together so rewarding.

Thank you for all that you do,

Thomas O'Connor
President

P.S. Sunny congratulations are in order for President Emeritus, Dan Meyers, on being recognized as the 87th Rochester Rotary Award Winner. An honor well deserved!

Sigl News

Exemplary Service

(L-R) Duffy Hickey, Jr., 2024 recipient Judy Meyer, and Art Pitt

Named in honor of Al Sigl's Founding Board Chair and it's first recipient, the Justin Vigdor Distinguished Service Award was created in 2024. The Award, which celebrates Justin's more than 60 years of dedication to Al Sigl's nonprofit mission, recognizes exemplary service and achievements.

Leading by example with an enduring style and grace, **Walter B.D. "Duffy" Hickey, Jr.** has served on several important committees and as a past Chair of the Board of Governors. He has been a member of Al Sigl's President's Circle of Hearts since its inception as well as Al Sigl's Planned Giving society. On Duffy's more than 40 years of volunteer service, President Emeritus, Dan Meyers, shared "Al Sigl has been so fortunate to benefit from Duffy's strong leadership and genuine kindness."

Art Pitt started as a Mechanic in 1983 and currently serves as Al Sigl's Director of Real Estate. Known for his positive attitude, including his usual greeting: "It's a beautiful day," Art's contributions go well beyond his many years as an employee. Most notably are the meaningful connections he has fostered with supporters, volunteers, vendors, and agency staff. For decades, Art's creative and common-sense approach to his work has helped Al Sigl best accommodate the changing needs of our nonprofit agencies and neighbors, always guided by the desire to do what is right.

Annual Picnic Marks 10 Years

(L-R) Peter Mendick, Marty Moll, John Mendick, Art Pitt and Tom O'Connor

This year marked the10th anniversary of our Howdy Neighbors Picnic, where we gather together to celebrate with Dr. Howard Ward's delicious BBQ ribs and ice cream while catching up with friends and neighbors.

Special thanks to the Theodore and Cashmere Mendick Foundation for their continued support of this favorite Al Sigl tradition.

Conditions for Care

Thank you to A. Thomas Hildebrandt and the Davenport-Hatch Foundation for your extremely generous $80,000 grant for strategic repairs to the chiller system at the Golisano Campus at Elmwood. Chillers are a costly, yet essential, tool to effectively and efficiently regulate the temperature in large buildings. Temperature, ventilation, and air quality can greatly impact an individual's ability to concentrate, retain information and more. By prioritizing the well-being of program participants and staff, Al Sigl is laying the foundation for improved health for all students, tenants and visitors.

Al Sigl is grateful for the Foundation's long history of support of our work together and applaud their help ensuring the best conditions for care in a building where so many receive critical support each year.

Independence Day Update

You may remember "Lani's" story from our Summer 2025 Independence Day campaign. This year, our friends at Rochester Hearing & Speech Center (RHSC), watched her walk through the doors at the Golisano Campus at Elmwood for the last time.

When Lani first came to RHSC around the age of two, she was seriously delayed in her developmental milestones. She shuffled instead of crawling or trying to stand and had limited speech.

The strides she made once she began receiving physical, occupational, and speech language therapy and special education at RHSC made a significant impact on getting her ready to start preschool this Fall. Congratulations, Lani!

Welcome

This summer, Al Sigl welcomed Greg Florence as Safety Manager, an important new role in our work to enhance all levels of safety at each of our campuses and facilities. Greg comes to Al Sigl with a background in Emergency Response and preparedness. Experienced in multi-campus management, his knowledge and skill set will add to the strengths of our dedicated Facilities, Fire and Safety teams.

Did You Know?

In 2026, due to program changes, our daily occupany increased.

Al Sigl added:

- **10 new classrooms**
- **12 new office spaces**
- **new OT & PT suites & a new Nurses suite**

Volunteer Spotlight
Creating Positive Change

"To me, giving back to the local community means using what you have available to you–your time, talents, relationships, and of course resources, to help make a meaningful difference where you live."

"I'm involved with Al Sigl because I believe in its mission and the incredible impact it has on so many individuals and families throughout our community."

"Through my involvement with the Fine Tastings volunteer committee and Al Sigl Council, I've had the opportunity to connect with others who share that same passion for creating positive change."

"In my career, I also help individuals, families and businesses think intentionally about their values and the causes they care about, and explore ways they can give back in a way that is meaningful to them and creates a lasting impact. There is a natural overlap between the two, and I love that."

-Jessica Lepore FSCP®, CEPA®
Crystal Clear Financial Group LLC

Interested learning more about volunteer opportunities?
Contact Kyle at **585.442.4102 x8929** or **kmascia@alsigl.org**.

The Power of Inspiration

For 15 years, The Inspiration Project has shown that everyone has a story worth telling. By bringing together individuals served by CP Rochester and students from the University of Rochester, the program empowers participants to share their creativity and connect through their writing. The students and adults from CP Rochester work side by side to produce a new volume of their anthology, *Dignity*, which is unveiled during an annual reading.

Latrice, who visited 13WHAM-TV earlier this year to talk about the project, was instrumental in developing the unique partnership. She is also a vocal advocate. "Teaching by example shows that people with disabilities are just like anyone else," she says.

To learn more about Project Inspiration or CP Rochester's programs for people of all ages, call **585.334.6000** or visit **cprochester.org**.

CP Rochester

Finding Community

For 11-year-old identical twins Sadie and Georgia, life has always been a shared adventure. That journey changed when Sadie was diagnosed with epilepsy. What appeared to be moments of "spacing out" were later identified as seizures. Through Empowering People's Independence (EPI), the twins learned about Camp EAGR, a summer camp for children with epilepsy and their siblings. The girls were nervous about going to sleepaway camp for the first time, but acclimated quickly.

For Sadie, it wasn't just getting to spend a week swimming and horseback riding. It was finding a community where she didn't feel different. Before attending Camp EAGR, Sadie wasn't comfortable talking about her epilepsy. Meeting children who shared similar experiences helped change that. Back home, their parents noticed the difference right away. "We saw a whole new Sadie," says her dad, Nick. To learn more about Camp EAGR and EPI's other programs, visit **epiny.org**.

epi
EMPOWERING PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENCE

Mind and Body

Depression affects 50% of people living with MS, yet it's often one of the most overlooked symptoms of the disease. While depression can be managed with medication and therapy, researchers are exploring another powerful tool: exercise. The Mood and Exercise Training Study for MS (METS for MS) is examining how two different home-based exercise programs may help manage major depressive disorder in people living with MS.

The goal isn't intense workouts; it's finding safe, accessible movement that meets people where they are. Visit **realtalkms.com** to listen to a podcast exploring this topic, including how even small steps can make a meaningful difference.

To learn more about local Upstate NY Chapter programs, including the MS Navigator® program or virtual Support Groups, visit **nationalmssociety.org**.
(Source: Facebook.com/nationalmssociety)

MS
National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Tools for Success

Pencils & Paper, the long-time program that helps educators obtain free classroom supplies for students in need, has officially relocated from Jewish Family Services to Rochester Rehabilitation Center, ensuring the program will continue to support local classrooms for years to come.

In 2025, Pencils & Paper donated more than $1.5 million in supplies to 1,527 teachers and 36,888 students. The first teacher shopping event under Rochester Rehabilitation Center's leadership took place in August and the shopping continues into November.

To learn more about this program, please contact **pencilsandpaper@rochesterrehab.org**.

Rochester Rehabilitation

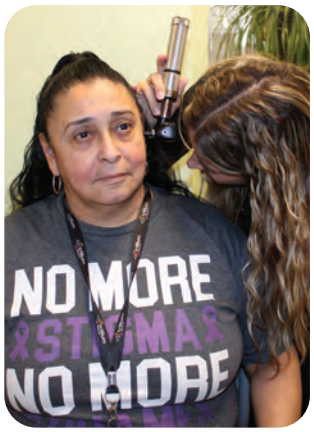
Going the Extra Mile

Health care coverage does not always determine whether someone needs transportation. Every day, Medical Motor Service (MMS) serves individuals whose appointments and essential services fall outside the limits of Medicaid, insurance plans, or program funded rides.

When coverage ends, the need for safe and reliable transportation does not. The Independence Program exists to fill that gap. It serves older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals living on fixed or limited incomes who would otherwise have no practical transportation option. Many participants need reliable access to a consistent schedule of daily, weekly, or monthly rides to help manage chronic conditions, attend medical appointments, or maintain stability in their daily lives.

The Independence Program is intentionally simple. A subsidy of $10 covers a single one-way ride, with the rider paying the remaining portion of the trip. To learn more about MMS's transportation services, visit **mmsnys.org** or call **585.654.7030**.

Better Hearing



Rochester Hearing & Speech Center (RHSC) is expanding access to hearing healthcare by offering free hearing screening events throughout the community. These convenient events provide individuals with an easy way to establish a baseline for their hearing health—without the need to schedule an appointment.

Approximately 1 in 7 Americans experience some degree of hearing loss. Untreated hearing loss has been associated with dementia and other health conditions, making early detection and regular hearing screenings an important part of maintaining overall health and well-being. Despite this, people wait an average of seven years before having their hearing checked.

Screening events have been hosted by organizations including Trillium Health, Lifespan, and Episcopal Senior Living, as well as Assemblymembers Jen Lunsford and Josh Jensen. These outreach efforts are made possible through the generosity of organizations, including the Waldron Rise Foundation. To learn more and find an upcoming event near you, visit **rhsc.org/audiology/community-hearing-screenings**.

ROCHESTER HEARING & SPEECH CENTER

A Chance to Succeed

When Jim first came to work for what is now Starbridge in 1997, he was searching for confidence, stability, and a chance to succeed. "I wasn't sure what I wanted to do or if I could do it," Jim recalls.

A part-time custodial position became a career spanning nearly three decades. Today, Jim works four days a week and takes pride in caring for the Starbridge community. "If I see something that needs to be done, I do it," he says. For Jim, having the trust and independence to do his job has made all the difference. "They let me do what I do. I have the autonomy to do my work, and people know I'll get it done."

That trust helped Jim build confidence and dream about what comes next. A lifelong creator, he hopes to start his own company and eventually employ people with disabilities. "I want to give people with disabilities a chance. If I can help someone achieve their goals or dreams, that's what I want to do."

After nearly 30 years, Jim says, "Working for Starbridge has been very good for me. It keeps me focused. It's the foundation that lets me dream about what's next." To learn more about Starbridge's programs, including Employment supports for individuals and businesses, please call **585.546.1700** or visit **starbridgeinc.org**.

STARBRIDGE
For the Hope and the How

Stay Connected

Follow us for more stories, news and upcoming events.

AL SIGL SPORTS CLASSIC

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More Than a Game

What an incredible day together! Over 150 golfers and friends of Al Sigl Community gathered at Midvale Country Club to celebrate the 57th Annual Al Sigl Sports Classic Golf Tournament. Heartfelt thanks to our 2026 Sports Committee Chair, Andy Crane, and our many generous sponsors, players, and volunteers. Events like these are a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when a community comes together around a shared purpose. Last year, Sports Committee events generated over $100,000 in grants to Al Sigl's seven nonprofit Member Agencies.

Aces for Abilities
2026 Al Sigl Tennis Benefit

Thank you to our lead sponsors

Tennis Club of Rochester;
Randy Schuster and Coordinated Plan;
Universal Imports;
University of Rochester Medicine;
Tom Adamski & Carmen Reyes-Adamski

Photos: Alex Nowak & Soumen Das

Tennis Benefit Combines Play with Purpose

Team Aces for Al Sigl

Net Dominators

While this year's weather led to some scheduling changes, the flexibility of our players showed us that despite a little (or a lot!) of rain, our supporters can always make an event shine. Congratulations to Saturday's Tournament winners, team Aces for Al Sigl, who will be recognized on the Joe Eduardo Award plaque honoring our friend and event founder. The Net Dominators, co-captained by Ruth O'Regan and Patrick McLaughlin, were the top fundraising team with Ruth once again coming in as the event's top individual fundraiser. Heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors, players, volunteers and friends for making this event a continued success.

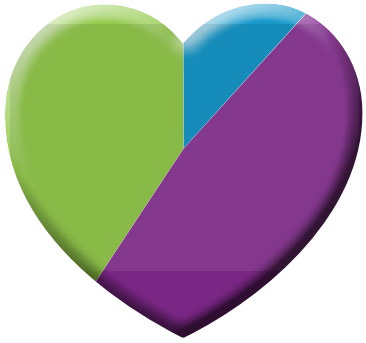
Every day across our campuses something meaningful is happening. Individuals are building independence, families are finding support, and our Member Agencies are helping people pursue their goals and participate more fully in our community. Your generosity helps make those moments possible.

Over the past year, Al Sigl has continued to invest in the places, partnerships, and possibilities that help our community thrive. From improving and modernizing spaces, adapting to changing priorities, and creating new avenues for collaboration, we are working to ensure that our Member Agencies—and the people they serve—have the resources and environments they need today and in the future.

Across six campuses and 20 buildings in the Rochester area, your support reaches far beyond our walls. It helps create opportunities for 55,000 children and adults with special needs to connect with vital programs, services, and resources while pursuing greater inclusion and achieving goals that matter to them.

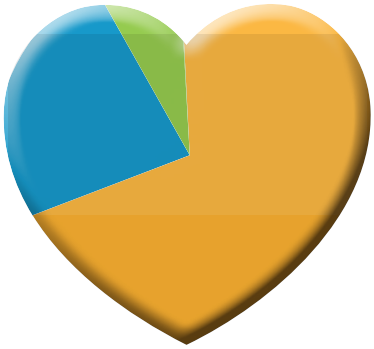
None of this happens alone. It happens because people like you believe in what is possible when a community comes together with purpose.

THANK YOU for being part of Al Sigl and for helping all of us *Achieve More Together*.



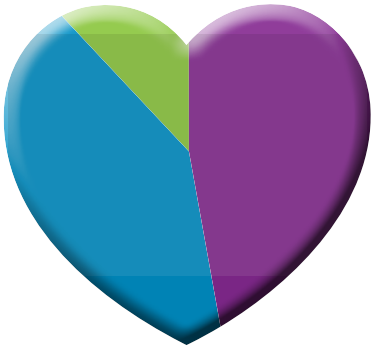
Consolidated Support and Revenue In **Millions**

Contributions & Bequests	$1,150
Revenues	$5,482
Investment Earnings	$5,151
Total	**$11,783**
Expenses	($8,115)
Total Change in N/A	**$3,668**



Assets

Cash & Investments	$43,431
Net Fixed Assets	$11,898
Other Assets	$4,918
Total Assets	**$60,247**



Liability

Long-Term Debt	$2,149
Accounts Payable & Accrued	$2,541
Accounts Held/Designated	$813
Total	**$5,503**
Net Assets	$54,744
Total Liability and Net Assets	**$60,247**

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Ways You Can Help

By supporting the Al Sigl Foundation, dedicated friends like you help sustain our work together.

- Join our community of monthly donors. A recurring gift by credit card can create a steady, lasting impact. Look for the monthly giving option at the top of the donation form.
- Follow our social pages and spread the word or tell a friend about our mission of *Achieving More Together*
- Build a lasting impact through a charitable gift annuity, life insurance beneficiary, or name Al Sigl Community in your will.

If you have already included Al Sigl in your estate plans, let us know so we can welcome you as a member of the Al 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 x2718** or **bgeglia@alsigl.org**.

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 Megan at **585.442.4102** x**8948** or **msassenhausen@alsigl.org**.

GO GREEN

Give us a call to request an electronic copy of future newsletters at 585.442.4102 x8948

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Each year, we ask our friends and neighbors what they like most about the annual Al Sigl Community WalkAbout.

#Why I WalkAbout

"I walk because there are so many people that can't—and as a person living with MS, I know there are days that I can't."

"Being able to see the smiles and spread joy is worth every second! Knowing that some of the money raised will help the MS Society means the world to me. The outreach, programs, and fundraising the MS Society does reminds us that there is help for us no matter what point we are at in our disease."

-Kristin Buck

Walk, Roll, and Cheer for Abilities

AL SIGL COMMUNITY OF AGENCIES
WALKABOUT

8:30 AM Registration

9 AM Walk starts

10:30AM Costume Parade

Join us at Eastview Mall on **Sunday, October 18th** for a morning of FREE, accessible, family fun.

This event brings together individuals, teams, and businesses to raise funds for Al Sigl's nonprofit Member Agencies. To learn more and register yourself or your team, scan the QR code or visit **alsigl.org/walkabout**.