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## **Golisano Autism Center to be Built in Rochester**

**Tom Golisano Makes \$2.5 Million Challenge Grant**

**Golisano Foundation Pledges First \$500,000 to Launch Capital Campaign**

**Innovative Collaborative Model will Serve Thousands with Autism**

**Rochester, N.Y. May 16, 2017** – Al Sigl Community of Agencies, AutismUp and CP Rochester announced today that they are collaborating to build the new *Golisano Autism Center Rochester*, which will expand and enhance autism services to serve the more than 10,000 people diagnosed with autism in the Greater Rochester and surrounding areas.

The new Center will be named for philanthropist and Paychex and Golisano Foundation Chairman, Tom Golisano, who announced that he is making a matching challenge grant of \$2.5 million to help build the Center.

The *Golisano Autism Center Rochester* will be located on South Avenue near Science Parkway and will include shared program spaces, a sensory gym, classrooms, therapy rooms and more. The total cost of construction for the 25,000 square foot building is \$5 million. Ground breaking is expected to commence in the fall of 2017 and opening is targeted for fall 2018.

Golisano said, "I am pleased to provide a challenge grant of \$2.5 million to help build this unique collaborative center, which will bring together a wide array of coordinated services and expertise under one roof. The Center will represent a significant improvement in how people with autism and their families can get the services they need over the course of their lifetimes. I hope that my gift will inspire others to join me and contribute in a meaningful way to this important endeavor."

The first major gift toward the anticipated two-year challenge comes from the Golisano Foundation in the amount of \$500,000, making the total commitment-to-date \$3 million.

### **New Center Will Transform Autism Services**

The establishment of the *Golisano Autism Center Rochester* will transform the delivery of autism services by co-locating and coordinating resources offered by multiple autism providers, each of which, has specialized areas of expertise. This comprehensive, enriched and innovative model emphasizes collaboration amongst complimentary autism-specific programs in the community. The proximity of the Center to related medical services will insure ease of access for thousands of families seeking autism services.

The *Golisano Autism Center Rochester* will provide a continuum of services that span a lifetime and offer a full array of coordinated program options for infants, toddlers, youth, teens and adults including, but not limited to: behavioral and primary care supports; respite; community habilitation; social, recreational and therapeutic services; a housing and employment liaison. High quality, evidence-based school-age instruction, developed specifically for individuals with autism, will be provided by Mary Cariola Children's Center. Lead partners Al Sigl,

AutismUp and CP Rochester will coordinate the addition of other affiliate autism service agencies to be housed at the center.

"We're excited to partner on this much-needed project for our community, and are grateful to Tom Golisano for helping to make it a reality. The opportunity to coordinate and customize autism-specific services, and prepare for the next stage of life together under one roof, will be a dream come true for families. As a parent of a child with autism, I know how exhausting and confusing it can be to go from place to place for services," explains Sarah Milko, Executive Director of AutismUp.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in 68 has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). ASD is a life-long developmental disability diagnosed between ages two to five that impacts communication, interaction, behaviors and learning in different ways, and requires a unique approach to support services. It's estimated that 10,000 live with autism in the Greater Rochester Area. The prevalence has grown at such an alarming rate that it has produced a significant gap in coordinated services for individuals and families.

"Our heartfelt thanks to Tom Golisano, Ann Costello and the Golisano Foundation Board of Trustees for believing in our vision to support the enhancement and expansion of autism services in our community," adds Mary Walsh Boatfield, President and CEO of CP Rochester.

"This innovative model for delivering autism-based services will be unlike anything else in our region," says Thomas O'Connor, President of Al Sigl Community of Agencies. "We anticipate that this model will be looked at on a national level and will eventually be the the go-to model for how a community prepares individuals with ASD for a successful and fulfilling life."

"The Foundation and Tom's investment in the *Golisano Autism Center Rochester* will have a long-lasting impact on individuals with autism, their families and the entire community," says Ann Costello, Golisano Foundation Director. "Our community is fortunate to have the collective expertise and dedication of Al Sigl Community of Agencies, AutismUp, CP Rochester, Mary Cariola Children's Center and others. Together their work will greatly improve quality of life, and the effectiveness of services delivered for individuals with autism, their families and providers alike.

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**The Golisano Foundation** is one of the largest private foundations in the United States devoted exclusively to supporting programs for people with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1985 with an initial gift of \$90,000 from B. Thomas Golisano, the founder and Chairman of Paychex, the Foundation now has more than \$33 million in gross assets and has awarded more than \$21 million in grants, about \$2 million annually, to non-profit organizations in a multi-county region surrounding Rochester, NY that serve people with intellectual disabilities.

**Al Sigl Community of Agencies** is a collaborative community network that provides high-quality, cost-effective real estate, business services, and philanthropic support to a growing array of organizations that serve children and adults with disabilities® and special needs.

**AutismUp** supports more than 2,000 individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families, by expanding and enhancing opportunities to improve quality of life via the provision of social, sensory, fitness, recreation and readiness programs, and education for parents and professionals. [www.autismup.org](http://www.autismup.org)

**CP Rochester**, an Al Sigl Community of Agencies Member Agency, was established in 1946 and provides clinical, residential, educational, and personal support services to individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in the greater Monroe County region.

**Mary Cariola** is a private, non-profit agency providing personalized, interdisciplinary, evidence-based education and life skill solutions, residential programs and other services that inspire and empower individuals with complex disabilities and their families.