



# 2016

Annual Report

*Celebrating  
70 Years*  
**Aspire**  
of WNY

# Aspire Leadership Message

As we report on the past year, we are well into 2017 – the 70th Anniversary of Aspire – formerly United Cerebral Palsy Association of Western New York. As such, this annual report celebrates an amazing heritage and highlights our growth and evolution over the past seven decades. Throughout are photographs depicting our heritage from the earliest days through today.

Three articles are provided to give you insights into our rich history. We value our early years but also provide examples of the roles we are playing in the service of those with developmental disabilities today. Please read the recollection of two individuals who have received supports from Aspire/UCPA for over 50 years. We also interviewed two dedicated, long-term employees who have worked for Aspire/UCPA for over 40 years.

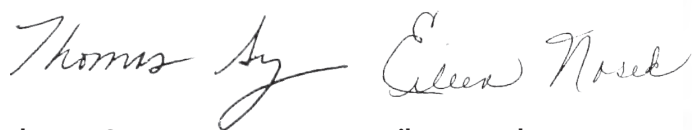
Reflecting back on 2016, there are some noteworthy accomplishments. Aspire purchased the facility at 7 Community Drive in Cheektowaga after renting it for nearly 30 years. The facility is home to our Health Center, Day Habilitation programs, and rapidly expanding community-based employment and community habilitation programs.

After a successful capital fund drive to expand/renovate our Center for Learning, it's now time for a new playground. Over \$60,000 was raised in 2016 to design a play facility with better wheelchair access, sensory musical instruments, and a new fully accessible structure. Stay tuned to visit the new playground by late summer.

Aspire's senior leadership, managers, staff, and individuals served spent part of 2016 crafting a new vision statement for our agency. This statement defines where we want to go and what we will look like when we get there. Promotion of the vision, mission, and values will be unveiled in mid-2017.

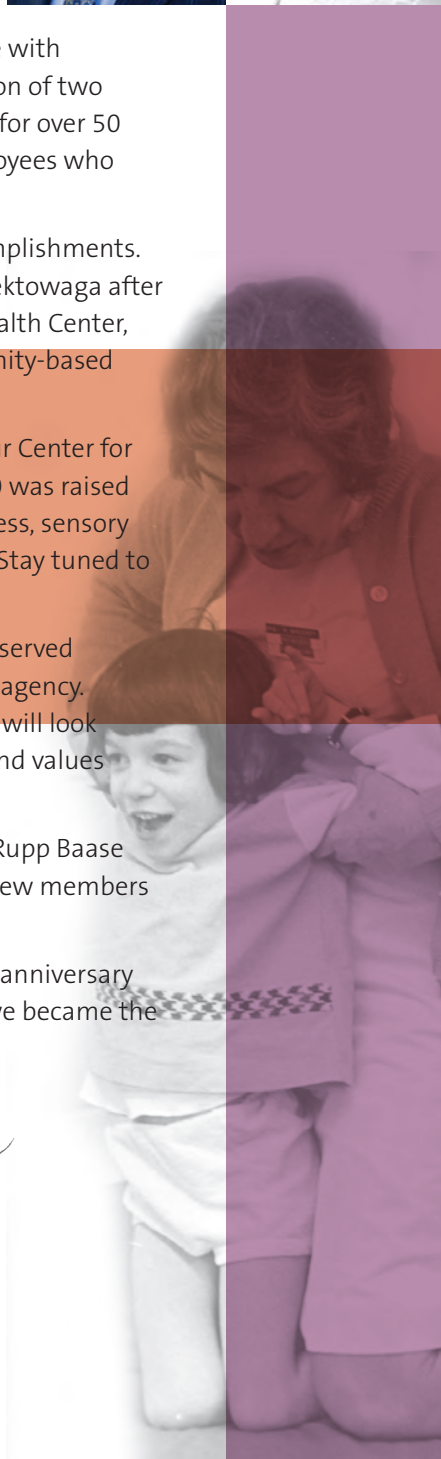
Our Board added one new member, Benjamin Burge from Rupp Baase law firm in Buffalo. Also, our Executive Committee added new members and continues to provide active leadership and counsel.

We look forward to you joining the celebration of our 70th anniversary and hope you enjoy this brief look at our past to see how we became the Aspire of today.



**Thomas Sy**  
President/CEO

**Eileen Nosek**  
Board Chairperson







# Aspire 70th Anniversary

In 1947, a small group of parents banded together to secure services for their children with cerebral palsy. One can safely assume they had no inkling of the legacy they would create for the next 70 years. From the earliest days, the Cerebral Palsy Association of Western New York, Inc., now formally known as Aspire of Western New York, has been helping individuals with disabilities live their lives to their fullest capabilities.

Initially intended to serve children through age 21, CPA realized the need to expand opportunities for a growing adult population with cerebral palsy and other disabilities. By 1949, CPA had created a recreation program for young adults with disabilities, and in 1951 the first preschool program was opened for children aged five to seven. The preschool expanded in 1952 to include children as young as three years old. Over the next 10 years, CPA added services for children with challenges beyond just cerebral palsy, requiring additional staffing and program modifications.



In 1971, the agency became officially known as United Cerebral Palsy Association of WNY, Inc. and obtained state licensing to develop a free-standing clinic. The decade of the 1970's was integral to the agency's development of Home and Residential Services. The first residential facility was opened in 1973 at the Elmer Lux Hostel on Halbert Street in Buffalo. To expand programming for adults with disabilities, the newly acquired Audubon Campus housed UCPA's Adult Services programs.

The 1980's included more growth for UCPA as a Respite Care Center was founded in Tonawanda, while 7 Community Drive became home for Adult and



Day Services, the Adult Clinic, Recreation, and Home Services. In 1984, the first Children's Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) was founded at the Audubon Campus to provide intensive medical and behavioral supports. That same year, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation of WNY was created as the fundraising arm for the agency.

In 1992, long-time board member Walter Brock was honored with the opening of the Walter Brock Center on Genesee Street to house Rossler Day Treatment

services. Technology Today began providing computer training and other technology programs for individuals with disabilities. By the late 90's, vocational services were introduced allowing individuals to pursue vocational goals. Changes were made, offering more choice and individualized supports. UCPA also began supporting the Southern Tier.

By 2003, another transition took place to better represent the agency as it had developed beyond its humble beginnings. Because the agency supported people with all imaginable disabilities and was helping them strive to achieve their greatest capabilities, it became known as Aspire of Western New York. Today, Aspire is providing supports to more than 3,500 individuals throughout the region. While times have changed, the innovation and creativity within the organization have

not. Aspire is nationally recognized for providing successful vocational training services, including World of Work, ADAPT, and MOVE, as well as the Project SEARCH Collaborative. In 2014, a major expansion and renovation at the Center for Learning was completed as part of the largest capital campaign in agency history. The Aspire Health Center, serving adults with disabilities for more than 25 years, recently received a makeover and is now certified as a Patient-Centered Medical Home™.

Another example of innovation at Aspire is the *iXpress* Arts Program, providing an outlet for individuals to express themselves through music and art. In recent years, *iXpress* artists have been featured at Burchfield-Penney Art Center, U.B. Center for the Arts, Chautauqua Institution, Albright-Knox, and local restaurants, libraries, and shops.

Today, Aspire of WNY continues to build upon a foundation where individuals make personal choices to determine their life path and help them achieve the dreams within their capabilities. For 70 years, the agency has been committed to helping people achieve their goals for life at home, school, work, and in their community. By embracing change through the years, Aspire has had an impact on supported individuals and those who work with and for the agency. For the

next 70 years and beyond, Aspire will continue encouraging people to dream big and create a meaningful vision for their life.





# A Life Serving Others

Janet Hansen (Chief Operating Officer) and Helene Raichilson (Occupational Therapist) have both been with Aspire of WNY for more than 40 years. Helene, as an Occupational Therapist with United Cerebral Palsy Association directly out of college in 1973, while Janet started as a Night Aid in a group home in 1975. Both have dedicated their lives to supporting those with disabilities and have witnessed Aspire grow into the agency it is today.

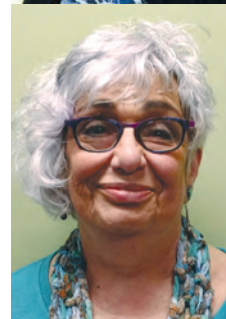
Helene talked about those early days, “In the early 70’s we began to see a lot of the attitudes about people with disabilities changing. We had the end of the Vietnam War, experienced the Civil Rights and Women’s Rights movements, it was time for those with disabilities to gain their rights. People realized that they could affect change and those were the kinds of people who came to work for UCPA at that time.”

Janet related another impetus for change, “It was a really big deal for UCP to have that first home, especially because of the Willowbrook documentary and the lawsuits being filed all over the country. It was time for people to start coming out of facilities and into better living environments. New York State found it was cheaper for private agencies to provide services and it was much better for those receiving the services.”

Both Janet and Helene are proud of their career with Aspire. According to Helene, UCP was always very progressive in making sure therapists were trained in modern methods to best support those with disabilities. “We know what we can do for children who have sensory and other issues and Aspire has always supported us with the right training and equipment.” Helene fondly reflects on her involvement in the creation of the Adaptive Equipment Center, the first of its kind in Western New York. They began by modifying braces, chairs, and other equipment so individuals had greater independence and nicer home environments.

Janet talks about how the industry has changed over the years. She is proud of the agency having grown to meet the needs of so many and how Aspire is providing people with disabilities to have more choices in their life. Even with growing regulations and decreasing budgets, she admires the incredible staff who are making such an impact in the lives of others. “Here at Aspire, we have such a tremendous staff, and I am so proud of them. That is something we have had from the very beginning, the staff’s culture of caring. That is why I have never wanted to be anywhere else but Aspire!”

They both agree that the work is more complicated now with more paperwork and challenges outside of the interactions with those we support, but their love for the mission hasn’t changed and never will.



*Pictured at top, Janet Hansen, and below, Helene Raichilson*



# We Are People First

Any retrospective on the history of United Cerebral Palsy Association (now Aspire of WNY), has to include the thoughts and memories of individuals who have been supported throughout the years. Elaine Matla and Joe Szymanski are two such individuals who have been with Aspire for most of their lives. Elaine has witnessed the agency grow from her days attending the preschool on North Street in Buffalo, while Joe first began receiving rehabilitation services in 1961.

Elaine has fond memories of all the people she has met and appreciates the many wonderful relationships that she has had with staff over the years. One of her highlights is when she finally moved from her parent's house to an Aspire home on Oakwood in 1994. While it was scary at first, she recalls how the manager, Sheila, and the rest of the staff helped her and her housemates, Rita, Richard, and Martha, all settle in.

Joe has a similar story with Aspire. He lived at home with his parents until moving to Holiday Lane in Hamburg 20 years ago. He received services at School 84 through 1979 after which he began attending 7 Community Drive. He still talks about the many fun excursions he participated in through the Social Recreation program, including trips to Las Vegas, Atlantic City, and a Buffalo Bills game in San Diego.

When talking about how they have seen Aspire change over the years, Elaine and Joe had similar responses. Elaine loves to be as independent as possible and talks about the opportunities Aspire has provided for her to explore new things that she may never have experienced. She is proud of the fact that she can use a computer now and also how much it means to her to have discovered her passion for creating art through Aspire's *iXpress* program. Joe is also appreciative of the variety of opportunities he has had with Aspire, especially the time he is able to spend at Tech Today. He also mentions how thankful he is to visit his cousin in Texas periodically.

Both Elaine and Joe can't imagine how their life would be without Aspire and the people who support them. When she learned that she would be interviewed for this historical perspective on Aspire, Elaine went to Tech Today at 7 Community and typed up several pages of notes about her experiences. She gave her notes a title, We Are People First. Elaine explains it by stating that Aspire has given her life, and the lives of her friends and peers, a sense of purpose.



*Elaine Matla and Joe Szymanski*

2016

## Donors

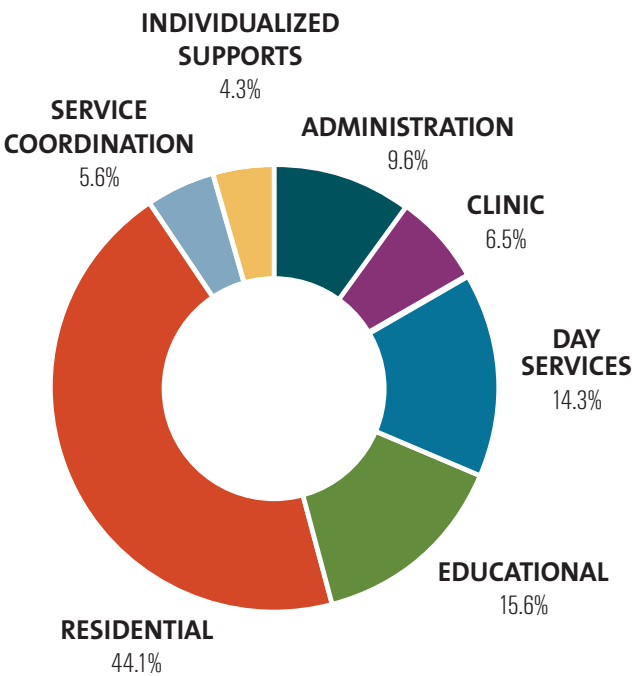
For a listing of all of our generous 2016 donors, please visit our website at <https://www.aspirewny.org/donorrecognition>



2016

# Financials<sup>1</sup>

Aspire of WNY & Affiliated Entities – Results of Operations Per Audited Financial Statements



If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, please call (716) 505-5502 and request to be removed from our mailing list. Thank you!

REVENUE	2016
Program Service Revenue <sup>2</sup>	\$70,141,985
Government Grants	\$1,923,797
Fundraising	\$635,917
Other	\$62,125
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$72,763,824</b>

<sup>1</sup> The above information was developed by management based on information in the audited financial statements.  
<sup>2</sup> 99% Federal and New York State Governmental Funding

EXPENSES	2016
Administration .....	9.6%
Clinic .....	6.5%
Day Services .....	14.3%
Educational .....	15.6%
Residential .....	44.1%
Service Coordination .....	5.6%
Individualized Supports .....	4.3%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>100%</b>

2016

# In Memoriam

INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY ASPIRE  
WHO PASSED AWAY IN 2016

- Randy Bancroft

Mary Rose Bottillo

Nathaniel Bowman

Lorilyn Breidenstein

Wanda Cuevas

Liam Exford

Michael Franklin

Paul Ganger

Frank Giordano

Ronald Heffley

Raymond Kaylor

Angela Leighton
- Pamela Mann

Warren Mobley

Bernard Osowski

Ellen Patti

Thomas Pulvirenti

Catherine Rusnak

Steven Scott

Kathy Skipworth

Carlos Vasquez

James Walker

Denise West

Walter Wright

## THE LIGHTHOUSE

(for my grandfather)

Carrie Ann Bace

He was a lighthouse person,  
Big hearted, and shiny.  
He set himself  
Like a tower on the beach,  
Built on sturdy rock,  
From which he now shines  
Himself across the rippling  
Surface of this ocean.  
His special purpose  
Was of the earth for a while,  
And to find the heart  
Inside me,  
Where he teaches me still  
To live with love  
For the other.



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For more information about  
our programs and services:

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