

GOLISANO FOUNDATION

MEDIA CONTACTS

Media Alert

For Immediate Release

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Rochester Rallies with Events on Wednesday March 5th to Spread the Word to End the R-Word Wheelchair dancing, group photo of 800 and more!

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - March 3, 2014 - Organizations throughout the Rochester, NY region are rallying to **Spread the Word to End the Word** on Wednesday, March 5 with day-long pledge activities and other special events to raise awareness and spark discussion.

This is the fourth year the **Golisano Foundation** is spearheading the campaign, which is held around the national **Spread the Word to End the Word** day of awareness on March 5. The campaign asks people to pledge to take a stand against using the R-word, "retard" or "retarded." The r-word has gained popularity in culture, but is offensive and derogatory.

[See Tom Golisano's video message](#)



Each year the foundation's goal is to reach out to more people who can spread the word and pledge to use respectful language that promotes more accepting attitudes for all people including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have unique gifts and talents to share with the world.

Activities on March 5th to Spread the Word to End the Word

Ann Costello, Director of the Golisano Foundation will be at the various activities and available for interviews.

9:00 - 11:30 AM

University of Rochester Medical Center, Cafe 601

DJ Louie

601 Elmwood Ave, Rochester

Will spin music while people take the pledge

Media Contact: Heather Hare | Heather_Hare@URMC.Rochester.edu

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

University of Rochester Wilson Commons Hirsch Lounge

Wheels in Motion

River Campus

This dance group of abled bodied persons and persons in wheelchairs will perform and the leader of the group will share his story of life in a wheelchair, his struggles and triumphs.

Media Contact: Melissa Greco Lopes | mgrecolo@admin.rochester.edu

Noon - 3:00 PM

University of Rochester Medical Center Cafe 601

Gregory Street Blues Band

601 Elmwood Ave, Rochester

The band will play while people take the pledge

Media Contact: Heather Hare | Heather.Hare@URMC.Rochester.edu

2:00 PM

Mercy High School

Large group photo - 800 students, faculty and staff

1437 Blossom Rd, Rochester, NY 14610

The entire student body, faculty and staff will gather in the Gallery for a photo at 2PM. The photographer will be above the crowd outside of the Library/Media Center. Mercy will Spread the Word on March 5th throughout the school in every classroom with posters, pledge banners, and online pledges.

Media Contact: Ginny Segerson Lenyk | vlenyk@mercyhs.com | 585) 288-7120, ext. 309 Media is advised to please arrive at 1:45 PM.

All Day Activities to Spread the Word

Penn Yan Academy

305 Court St, Penn Yan, NY 14527

School-wide announcement. Students will all receive Spread the Word to End the Word wristbands in homeroom classes. Student leaders will wear r-word T-shirts. During lunches students can sign the pledge banner that will hang in the front lobby for all to see and to sign, as a visual impact of the event and its importance. A video is also being made by our teacher librarian and media students to show to all students Friday during a school wide assembly as part of morning announcements. It will signify that the importance of ending the r-word deserves more than just a day of recognition and is something to continually strive for.

Media Contact: Melissa Rood | mrood@pycsd.org

Sigl Community of Agencies

1000 Elmwood Ave, Rochester, NY 14620

The Sigl Community has added the pledge link to its web site and is sharing posts and content on social media. They will spotlight Spread the Word to End the Word in their e-newsletter, invite friends and neighbors to take the pledge, and have posters hung throughout Al Sigl's campuses.

Media Contact: Peggy Fortune | PFortune@alsigl.org

Roberts Wesleyan College

2301 Westside Dr, Rochester, NY 14624

The College's Academic Diversity Committee has invited faculty to share information in classes about the campaign. Promotional materials will be available to the campus community at several locations across campus on March 5.

Media Contact: Kym Woodard Woodard_Kym@roberts.edu

About Spread the Word to End the Word

Spread the Word to End the Word was started by youth and is an ongoing effort of Special Olympics International, Best Buddies and other supporters.

"Most people who use the words retard or retarded do not mean to be hateful, but to the millions of people around the world have intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities, and their families and friends, it is hurtful, and as cruel and offensive as any other slur," said Ann Costello, Director of the Golisano Foundation.

"We believe that with greater awareness Rochester can lead the way nationally, and inspire other communities to make a dramatic change - and to think before using words that perpetuate the stigma and negative stereotypes."

"We made a big impact last year and are grateful for the response we received. Now we need to build on that awareness and keep the message going.

"We're asking people, schools, businesses, organizations and communities to take the pledge to end the r-word and use the new r-word, respect. It's easy, it doesn't cost anything, it takes just a minute and it can make a big difference."

Go to r-word.org and take the pledge, and to get information and resources on how to Spread the word to end the word! in schools and organizations.

Email the Foundation with Pledge Activities

The Foundation will recognize those organizations that are spreading the word on the golisanofoundation.org web site.

To be included organizations should send an email to info@golisanofoundation.org.

About the Golisano Foundation

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 \$28 million in gross assets and has awarded more than \$17 million in grants, about \$1.2 million annually, to non-profit organizations in a multi-county region surrounding Rochester, New York that serve people with developmental disabilities.

The foundation is committed to opening doors, changing perceptions, and forging unprecedented partnerships to provide individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with pathways to self-sufficiency, personal dignity, and the best possible expression of their abilities and talents throughout their lifetimes.

Through targeted initiatives, it is our vision that communities will encourage and commit to inclusion, acceptance and opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and provide services that empower individuals to make their way productively and creatively in their communities.

For more information see golisanofoundation.org

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