



**For Immediate Release**

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**Cantalician Center, Learning Disabilities Association Announce Plans to Merge;  
Official Transition to be Complete in Early 2022**  
*New name, identity to be unveiled in coming weeks*

BUFFALO, NY - In an effort to better serve children and adults of all abilities across Western New York, two of the region's leading service organizations announced plans to officially join forces.

Cantalician Center for Learning, Inc. and the Learning Disabilities Association of WNY, Inc. have begun the process for merging into one entity that will provide support to approximately 750 individuals each year. The merger is expected to be officially complete in early 2022.

"We are beyond excited to bring our two organizations together under one umbrella," said Anne Spisiak, Executive Director of the Cantalician Center. "Our organizations have partnered together for many years and we share similar values and a long history of providing innovative community-based support. As a united network, our goal is to enhance the services we provide and reach even more people in need."

"Like everything we do, this decision is being made, first and foremost, with the people we support in mind, and also with a mindful eye toward the future," added Learning Disabilities Association Executive Director Marc Hennig. "We operate in a time when the prospect of federal and state funding cuts is always looming. By combining forces and concentrating our efforts, we will be better able to advance our shared commitment to strengthen the quality and range of supports we provide."

The Cantalician Center for Learning and the Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York have long been stalwarts of serving those in need throughout the community. The Cantalician Center was founded in 1956 as a day school program for children with disabilities. Today, the organization offers meaningful, integrated services to hundreds of children and adults with developmental disabilities and people in need across Western New York from birth through retirement through its Early Childhood Community Services, School Age, Preschool and Daycare Services, as well as its Day Habilitation Services, Employment Services, and Contract Sales through its division, Diversified Labor Solutions.

Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York traces its roots to 1965, when Rachel Howard, a local grandmother, sought help when her grandson was experiencing significant learning disabilities in school. She agreed to start a support group for parents of children with suspected learning disabilities. Within five years, the group had grown to nearly 500 people. Today, LDA offers a full range of support services and serves hundreds of individuals annually in the eight counties of Western New York.



Spisiak and Hennig will continue to lead the combined organization, and said they plan to unveil a new organization name and identity in the coming weeks. As they prepare to operate as one network, their teams have already begun to work together in several operational areas, such as human resources, information technology and finance. They are focused on strengthening and continuing to grow not only the delivery of services, but also the number of individuals and families they are able to reach.

“We are looking beyond the present,” Hennig continued. “How can we have the biggest impact on generations of Western New Yorkers who need our support? That’s our guiding principle and the same spirit that has helped our individual organizations continually grow and evolve throughout our respective histories.”

“Ultimately, it’s about people and service,” said Spisiak. “People depend on us and our commitment to them has never been stronger. At the same time, both organizations are incredibly fortunate to have passionate team members who are dedicated to serve. That is a strong foundation to build upon, for the next six decades and beyond.”

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