



For Immediate Release

May 5, 2022

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**‘Beyond Support Network’ Chosen as New Name Following
Merger of Cantalician Center, Learning Disabilities Association**
New organization will support more than 1200 people across Western New York

- Cantalician Center for Learning, Inc. and Learning Disabilities Association of WNY, Inc. will merge to form Beyond Support Network
- Intent to merge was announced in November of 2021
- New organization name, logo and colors revealed to the faculty and staff during special presentation on Thursday, May 5.

BUFFALO, NY – Leaders from the Cantalician Center for Learning, Inc. and the Learning Disabilities Association of WNY, Inc. announced on Thursday that upon completion of their merger, announced in late 2021, the new organization will be known as Beyond Support Network.

The merger will bring together two organizations with a combined 123 years of service to the region and a record of collaborating to provide a wide range of support services. Beyond Support Network will now provide support to more than 1200 individuals across Western New York each year.

“Our merger has really been a natural progression of how two organizations, each with a wonderful history of providing innovative, community-based support, have continually strived to provide the best, most coordinated services we possibly can,” said Anne Spisiak, Executive Director of Beyond Support Network, who held the same role at the Cantalician Center since 2015 after starting with the agency in 2009. “In working together to reach and grow beyond any boundaries in supporting those we serve every day, we found common bonds and values, a shared vision, organizational chemistry, and, ultimately, our new identity.”

The Beyond Support Network name and logo are being introduced to employees, individuals and families who receive support from the organization, as well as strategic provider partners throughout the day today.

“Every day, our team has the incredible opportunity to engage with hundreds of Western New Yorkers who depend upon the supports we provide,” added Deputy Executive Director Marc Hennig, who has been with Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York Executive Director since 2002 and Executive Director since 2018. “By bringing our organizations together as Beyond Support Network, we are crystallizing, both in how we operate and how we identify ourselves, the work we do in helping people achieve important

goals, and the many ways we can help them continue their personal growth by building a community of opportunity.”

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. LDA also created and operates Starlight Studio and Art Gallery, a unique integrative arts program that supports adults with disabilities in their artistic development.

The two organizations began working together in several operational areas, such as human resources, information technology and finance over the last several months, while the proposed merger was reviewed. The plan was officially approved by New York State Supreme Court Justice Amy C. Martoche in April. According to Spisiak and Hennig, they will complete other administrative measures, such as the merger of payroll systems and transferring of contracts to the new organization name, in the coming months.

“Now that we are beyond the legal and technical aspects of the merger, the real excitement starts,” Spisiak said. “Our organizations have impacted tens of thousands of lives throughout our respective histories. Now, together with our dedicated staff members and provider partners, we’ll be able to create new pathways to support even more people across our region. We are excited by what this means for the people we serve today, those in need of support, and the lives we’ll be able to impact well into the future.”

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