

FALL 2025

# SPIRIT

SHARING STORIES OF FAITH AND COURAGE



HERITAGE  
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

People of possibility

## SELF-ADVOCACY

Voices Rising | Page 6



**Page**  
**3** Craig Thesing  
in the Volunteer  
Spotlight

**Page**  
**8** Compass  
Accreditation,  
24 Years Strong

**Page**  
**9** HCS and the  
Chamber's  
Top 100



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

This season I'm deeply thankful — for God's steady hand, for the people who walk this path with us and for the many lives touched through our work. With faith and trust in His direction, we continue together in hope and purpose.

That spirit of perseverance was evident when the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities renewed our Compass accreditation for the 24th year this summer. The validation team affirmed our strong systems and culture of continuous improvement. As one of only four Compass-recognized agencies in New York, we're strengthening our quality framework to reflect not just regulations but the real, everyday experiences of the people and families who choose our services.

I'm especially grateful for those who make our work possible: the staff members who serve with dedication, the families and community who stand with us, and the people we support who share their voices and guide our path forward. Together, we reflect the hope and strength God provides.

We've also seen that self-advocacy strengthens quality. Renewed momentum is building around the power of self-advocacy, with a group meeting regularly at the Pieters Family Life Center. Stories abound of speaking up, being heard and shaping one's own path, with allies offering support and encouragement along the way. That feedback creates a direct loop into quality improvement.

As we look ahead to a new year, my prayer is that we continue walking in faith, encouraging one another and trusting in God. In every moment, His abundant love invites us to give thanks, to serve and to celebrate His work in our midst. †

With gratitude,



Marisa Geitner  
President & C.E.O.



*Marisa Geitner talks with attendees at the 2025 Spring Summit.*

***"Follow God's example,  
therefore, as dearly loved  
children and walk in the way  
of love, just as Christ loved us."***

**— Ephesians 5:1-2**



When you see this icon, it means there's a video at **HeritageChristianServices.org/newsletter**.

**ON THE COVER:** Ryan Knorr is a self-advocate who has spoken up and found supports that better fit his abilities and way of life.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### West Herr Automotive Group and the Scott Bieler Family Foundation

This fall, Heritage Christian Services celebrated the ribbon cutting of the Scott Bieler Family Foundation Home on Townline Road in Pendleton, now home to six men. Part of the Homes with Heart campaign, this home creates possibilities for people to age in place.

We are proud to recognize West Herr Automotive Group and the Scott Bieler Family Foundation for their extraordinary generosity. Their commitment made it

possible to incorporate long-term accessibility features into this home, ensuring an impact for generations to come.



*West Herr Automotive Group President & C.E.O. Scott Bieler cuts the ribbon on the Scott Bieler Family Foundation Home.*

West Herr's support has made a lasting difference before. Through the campaign, the West Herr Automotive Home on Names Road in Chili allows six people supported by HCS to remain in their home through every stage of life.

In recognition of their dedication and alignment with our values, West Herr Automotive Group and the Scott Bieler Family Foundation have been named the 2025 HCS Community Partner. Their consistent investment has helped us build forever homes designed for dignity and joy. †

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### 2025 Gail Otto Community Service Award Winner

The 2025 Gail Otto Community Service Award was presented to Craig Thesing at the Volunteer Appreciation Event in September. Named for Gail Otto, one of Heritage Christian Services' founders, this award honors people whose volunteerism has had a lasting impact on our organization.

For more than a decade, Craig has faithfully shared his time and talents at such Heritage Christian Services' events as the Sheep Shearing Festival and the Heritage Hero Run + Stroll + Roll. His willingness to serve shines through in every role, whether greeting guests, assisting behind the scenes or stepping in wherever help is needed. Craig approaches each event with a smile, a generous heart and the energy to see it through from start to finish.

Craig's uplifting positive spirit inspires fellow volunteers and ensures that every event is not only successful but also memorable. His dedication strengthens our community and reflects the very heart of Heritage Christian's mission. †



*Craig Thesing holds the Gail Otto Community Service Award.*

## GIVING TUESDAY

**Tuesday, Dec. 2**



Join the global generosity giving wave!



Make your impact count by giving to Heritage Christian Services for #GivingTuesday.



Your donation will ensure that people can live in comfortable, familiar homes through all phases of their lives.

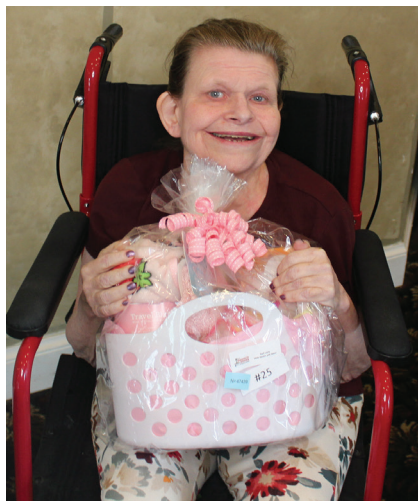


Learn more about how your gift can make a profound impact at

**HeritageChristianServices.org/GivingTuesday.**



# HERITAGE HAPPENINGS



## Spaghetti Dinner Celebrates WNY

This year's Spaghetti Dinner & Basket Raffle at Banchetti by Rizzo's in Amherst welcomed over 300 people for a night of joy and connection. Together, we raised over \$28,000 for the Heritage Christian Services Foundation. This wouldn't have been possible without our generous sponsors, donors and attendees. †

Presented by:



*Lisa Thomson shows off the basket she won at the Spaghetti Dinner.*

## Heart of Dance

Heart of Dance delivered a captivating and memorable performance to a full house. Staff members, people supported by the agency and family members took to the stage to put on a dazzling display of movement and dance. This year's performance featured music from genres including reggae, rock, hip-hop, pop and more. †



*Heart of Dance performers take to the stage.*

## DSP Recognition Week 2025

Caring professionals were recognized during Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, Sept. 7-13. Celebrations around the agency showed appreciation for direct support staff members. This



year, for a special video, we invited staff members to watch messages from families, a powerful reminder of the impact caring professionals make every day. We're grateful for caring professionals all year round. †

## ERN Holiday Toy and Gift Drive

Spread holiday cheer this season by contributing to the Employer Resource Network toy and gift drive, organized by the success coaches. Last year, the drive provided gifts to 190 children from over 70 families. Scan the code for an Amazon wish list, or drop off donations of new and unwrapped gifts or gift cards at the Heritage Christian Services offices by Dec. 15. †



*People danced during the festivities at the Pieters Family Life Center in Rochester.*

## Celebrating 41 Years of Heritage Christian Services

Celebrations were held in Rochester and Buffalo in honor of Heritage Christian Services' anniversary on June 24, a day that marks the opening of the first home on Jennifer Lane. People wore Heritage Christian gear and enjoyed a DJ and dancing to celebrate 41 years of community building and offering opportunities for people to live out endless possibilities. †



*Leadership Circle members Mike Osborn, Bill Rhinehart, Eileen Farlow, and Pat and John Feola were celebrated at this year's luncheon.*

## Annual Leadership Circle and Legacy Society Luncheon

We honored the generosity of Heritage Christian Services Leadership Circle and Legacy Society donors at the Arbor Loft in Rochester. We welcomed 71 new Leadership Circle members, who made gifts of \$1,000 or more this year, and three new Legacy Society members, who have included Heritage Christian in their estate plans. We are deeply grateful for their support. †

*HCS staff members worked alongside representatives from Bethel Ministries International on a recent trip to Guatemala.*



## International Ministries in Guatemala

Since 2001, Heritage Christian Services has partnered with Bethel Ministries to lead mission trips to Chimaltenango, Guatemala. Each year, volunteers host a three-week camp for people who use wheelchairs or adaptive equipment. This September, HCS sent another team that, in addition to visiting homes, distributing food and conducting a wheelchair clinic, built another two homes during the trip. To date, 19 homes have been built. †



# SAVE THE DATE

**Dec. 2, 2025:** #GivingTuesday/ROC the Day

**Dec. 3, 2025:** Holiday Tree Lighting at the Pieters Family Life Center

**Dec. 18, 2025:** Gala Holiday Pops with the RPO at Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre

**April 21, 2026:** Spring Planning with Purpose Seminar at the Pieters Family Life Center

**April 25, 2026:** Sheep Shearing Festival at Springdale Farm

**May 5, 2026:** Heart of Dance at Monroe Community College

**June 3, 2026:** HCS WNY 30th Anniversary

**Aug. 3, 2026:** Golf Classic at Monroe Golf Club

**See details at [HeritageChristianServices.org/events](https://HeritageChristianServices.org/events)**



Jeff Pecoraro, Matthew Hondt, Derek Scott and Jack Feola had a great time at Bills Camp this year.

## Go Bills!

More than 250 people from Heritage Christian Services were welcomed with great hospitality to Bills Camp at St. John Fisher University. Guests enjoyed a private tent with catered breakfast and lunch, as well as a great view of the action. Billy Buffalo greeted the group, and people cheered on their favorite players as they prepared for the season. †



Attendees, organizers and speakers pose for a photo at the kick-off event.

## Women of Color and Allies Connect

Hundreds gathered in Niagara Falls for the sixth annual Women of Color Summit to explore this year's theme, "A C.A.L.L. to Action: Commit, Assemble, Leverage and Lead." Presented by Elevesity, the event brought together women of color and allies to lead, connect and thrive. The two-day kickoff event was followed by two days of virtual sessions. †

Diamond Jones attended the kickoff event for the Empower HERitage employee resource group.



## ERG Kickoff event at PFLC

Heritage Christian Services held its first Empower HERitage employee resource group at the Pieters Family Life Center. ERGs are employee-led communities that provide opportunities for people with shared experiences to come together, celebrate diversity, foster professional growth and create lasting impact. Members of the group encouraged one another by sharing personal experiences and exploring ways to strengthen self-advocacy in the workplace and beyond. †



## Summer Fun at Rochester Rotary Sunshine Camp

This year, HCS welcomed 18 campers to Rochester Rotary Sunshine Camp in Rush for Respite Camp. From fishing and paddle boating to climbing the rock wall, the days were packed with excitement.

That same week, more than 700 friends and family members gathered to experience fellowship and fun activities at Family Night. Guests enjoyed music, carnival games and a visit from the Rochester Amerks Moose as they celebrated community together. †


**Top left:** Ivelisse Pereira Castro and Christopher Zimmerman enjoy some fishing at Rochester Rotary Sunshine Camp.

**Bottom left:** The Holleran family, Mary, Jim and Katie, at this year's Rotary Sunshine Family Night.





# Self-Advocates: Changing Communities Together

A man with a mustache, wearing a dark plaid shirt and dark pants, is sitting in a blue and black wheelchair on a paved path. He is smiling at the camera. The background shows a brick building with a white door frame and some greenery. The wheelchair has 'JAY' written on the side.

When Ryan Knorr looked around at the supports available to him, he realized day habilitation wasn't the right fit. Instead, he advocated for a community habilitation plan that better supports his priorities, including his nine-year commitment to volunteering as a donor ambassador with the American Red Cross of Western New York.



That spirit is at the heart of self-advocacy: having the confidence and tools to speak up, make choices and shape one's own life, even when it's hard. For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, it can mean standing up for one's rights, questioning the status quo and taking the initiative to engage in leadership roles in ways big and small. Allies — staff members, family, friends or community members — play an important role by listening, encouraging and walking alongside self-advocates.

Heritage Christian Services partners with the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State to ensure that people have opportunities to learn, connect and lead.

At one recent session at the Pieters Family Life Center, a panel of self-advocates encouraged others to get involved. Ryan attended and spoke about the importance of having options for transportation. Navigating public transit services highlights how systems can open doors.

Mara Wright, another strong self-advocate, lives independently and is an active member of the HCS CARE Committee, a self-advocacy group based in Buffalo. She shares knowledge with advocacy groups, works two jobs and enjoys encouraging her peers. With support from a nurse, Mara sets weekly goals to gain independence, from using Buffalo's Paratransit to managing her own appointments. "There, I did it!" she said enthusiastically when explaining how she has embraced advocating for herself.



## FIND OUT MORE

For more information, visit [HeritageChristianServices.org/fair](https://HeritageChristianServices.org/fair). To learn more about the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State, visit [sanys.org](https://sanys.org).

Sherry Gricar, a faith community inclusion specialist, said the CARE Committee, a group of people who mainly live in residential homes supported by HCS, meets once a month to talk about community concerns. "This group," she said, "they're big encouragers of each other and sharing their experiences. It's cool to hear them problem-solving together."

"Self-advocates are building the courage and skills to speak up for themselves and others," said Maureen Phillips, director of advocacy supports and community resources. "As people grow in that role, they not only shape their own lives but help create communities that welcome everyone."

Through this partnership, self-advocates like Ryan and Mara are finding new ways to grow. Their voices help shape inclusive communities and ensure that support reflects each person's goals and choices. †

**"Self-advocates are building the courage and skills to speak up for themselves and others."**

– Maureen Phillips

DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY SUPPORTS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## National Effort Continues for Recognition of DSPs

National advocacy for direct support professionals is pressing forward, with ongoing efforts to secure federal recognition for them. The outcome could directly shape wages, benefits and the long-overdue recognition these workers deserve.

Joe Macbeth, president and C.E.O. of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, is a leading advocate for establishing a federal Standard Occupational Classification for direct support professionals. This is a critical step in the continued work for fair wages, benefits and recognition for direct care workers.

Although the U.S. House of Representatives did not pass the recent Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act, there is still work to do.

"We are hopeful that our advocacy efforts will be recognized and direct support professional will become an official job title and classification," Macbeth said.

More than 10,000 people weighed in during a recent review process, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics is now considering new occupational categories, a rare opportunity that comes only once every eight to 10 years. †





# The Continued Pursuit of Quality

Heritage Christian recently received Compass accreditation for the 24th year in a row, affirming our long-standing commitment to the highest standards of care and individual protections. Compliance remains essential, and meeting every benchmark is a responsibility taken seriously. At the same time, quality extends beyond just the basic requirements. It shows up in safe environments, meaningful relationships and the everyday experiences of people and families who choose our services.

Vicki Reina, vice president of quality advancement, notes that this work includes strengthening communication with staff members so everyone understands their role in providing quality services.

"Knowledge is power," Vicki said, "and quality begins with understanding. It's important that we teach, talk about and show what quality looks like. That way, people can recognize it when it's there and when it's not. Real quality grows in places where people work together, stay curious, ask questions and keep improving."



Members of Heritage Christian Services and the OPWDD team converge to validate another Compass designation.

Families have a crucial role in our quality framework. Their feedback helps us highlight areas that are essential to the best interactions. The individual and family survey, completed in October, is one way those voices are shaping decisions.

Meaningful connections remind us that quality is about more than policies — it's about people. It begins with compassion, listening without agenda and honoring each person's heart and lived experience.

The Compass validation team saw that quality is built into everyday practice at HCS. They highlighted our smart use of technology, fresh approaches to improvement, welcoming onboarding process and the sense of consistency and inclusion that runs throughout the organization.

This year's renewal came with a reflection of our strong systems and our ongoing commitment to learning, growing and providing the best possible support. †

## GIFTS OF SUPPORT



Many thanks to the **Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority** for supporting agricultural education at Springdale Farm, operated by Heritage Christian Services and owned by Monroe County Parks. †

The **Children's Guild Foundation** has our gratitude for supporting our Club Adventure respite program in Tonawanda. †



We are humbled by the generosity shown by the following contributors who have provided support of enabling people to stay in their homes throughout their lives with safety, comfort and dignity. †



The **Charles J. & Burton S. August Family Foundation** generously provided support as we work to replace our therapeutic pool at the Pieters Family Life Center. †

Our heartfelt thanks to the **Walter Hubbell Employment Services Fund** and the Rochester Red Wings, whose support across 12 years has contributed \$385,000 for the Employment Alliance. †

Heritage Christian Stables extends heartfelt thanks to **Camp Smile**, the **Odd Fellow & Rebekah Benefit Fund** and **Wegmans** for their generous support. †

We thank **The Chapel at CrossPoint** for supporting International Ministries and our mission trips to Guatemala. †



Elevesity, the education and training division serving businesses around the state, thanks the following organizations for helping promote career development and equity through the ColoRISE Lunch and Learn series, Empower to Lead program and Women of Color Summit. †





# AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

## Joanie Parker Honored

After a 29-year career, Joanie Parker retired as vice president of education, employment and Finger Lakes day services. Joanie received the Ally Award at this year's Women of Color Summit and is a 2025 ICON Honors recipient. †



## Mark Zawacki Honored



Mark Zawacki, executive director of the Heritage Christian Services Foundation, was named the Robert A. Clinger Outstanding Fundraising Professional by the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising professionals. Mark's contributions are many, including his pivotal role in the success of the \$10.1 million Homes with Heart campaign. †

## HCS in Chamber's Top 100

Heritage Christian Services was again named to the Greater Rochester Chamber Top 100 list, a yearly honor given to companies in the area that have a profound impact on the region's economic vitality and the lives of thousands of people. †



## Expressive Beginnings Honored with Elevating Women Award

Expressive Beginnings Child Care was named a 2025 Elevating Women honoree by the Rochester Business Journal. The recognition highlights organizations in the Rochester region that actively support and empower women through documented results and innovative practices. Expressive Beginnings stood out for its commitment to creating opportunities, elevating women's voices and investing in their growth. †



ROCHESTER BUSINESS JOURNAL 2025  
**ELEVATING WOMEN**  
COMPANIES LEADING THE WAY



**Top row:** Mark Zawacki, Sara Eggert, Iesha Eldridge and Carrie Hallock.

**Bottom row:** Samantha DeMart, Theresa Buick, Marisa Geitner, Ashley Wilbern, Joanie Parker, Donna Mostiller and Stephanie Ward.

## Marisa Geitner Awarded for Inclusive Leadership

Marisa Geitner has been named the Greater Rochester Chamber Inclusive Leadership Award recipient. This award is presented annually to a leader in the Rochester region whose work exemplifies a deep and lasting commitment to fostering belonging across diverse backgrounds. In addition, the Rochester Business Journal has named Marisa to its 2025 Power List for Health Care, which honors efforts to improve the health of the Rochester community. †



**Terry Wihlen** is the new vice president of clinical and Finger Lakes residential services. With experience across major health systems and a personal family connection to Heritage Christian, he is dedicated to advancing inclusion, dignity and meaningful outcomes. †



**Chris McConnell** has joined Heritage Christian Services as vice president of education, employment and Finger Lakes day services. His work is inspired by his son with intellectual disabilities, grounding his commitment to inclusion and advocacy. †



The National Human Resources Association has selected **Lori Florack** as its Human Resources Executive of the Year. Florack, a member of the HCS board of directors, is executive vice president and chief human resources officer at Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. †



**Danielle Pierleoni**, legacy and leadership giving manager, has been named to the Rochester Business Journal's Forty Under 40 list. Danielle contributed to the Homes with Heart campaign success and has built strong relationships with our donors, re-energizing the HCS planned giving program. †



**Michelle Kenville**, director of quality advancement, has been honored with the Monroe County Hispanic Heritage Award. She was awarded for her commitment and contributions to strengthening our shared values of inclusion, diversity, equity and access. †



**Sarah Campbell**, community services coordinator, also works at Arc GLOW, where she was honored as direct support professional of the year at the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State Western Region Self-Advocacy Conference. †

# HONORARIUMS & MEMORIALS

Often, people will donate in memory of a loved one who has passed away. The agency sends the bereaved family a note of sympathy and informs them of the gift, without disclosing the amount. People also mark joyous occasions — like birthdays, anniversaries and weddings — by donating in honor of a friend or family member.

Questions? Email  
info@HeritageChristianServices.org.

MAY 2025 - AUGUST 2025

## IN MEMORY OF

**Margita Amidic**  
Bob and Dee Lucacci  
Drew and Jennison  
Bielemeier

**Mary Baumbarger**  
Paul Baumbarger

## Arnold Bennigsohn

Annemarie Baldo  
Marilee Buechel  
Barbara and Patrick  
Corona

Nancy and Kevin Gillan  
Laura and David Goldman  
Mary Ellen and Gerry Green

Norma and Anthony Leone  
Jane Murray  
Steven Smith  
Cheryl Wightman

**Michele Ciehomski**  
Joni Pobedinsky

**Rosaria Cipolla**  
Debra Giordano

**Robert Cottier**  
Brad Cottier

**Emilia D'Angelo**  
David and Carol Coon

**Laura DeLong**  
Ralph and Laura Vanner

**Kim DeSarra**  
Bob and Sue DeSarra

**Paul DeSarra**  
Bob and Sue DeSarra

**Jennifer Duncan Young**  
Dick and Kathie Duncan

**Mimi Dundon**  
Drew and Jennison  
Bielemeier

Anne Brett  
Jillian Carter  
Kim and Tim Clark  
Charles and Carole  
Ann Collard  
Marisa Geitner  
Linda Gerlach  
Judy Knab  
Michael and Jan Osborn

Julie Owen and Jeff Cook  
Danielle Pierleoni  
Donna and David Willome  
Mark and Nancy Zawacki

**Ted Everitt**  
Jon Dolf Bass and  
Edith Bass

**Mary Beth Ferguson**  
John Ferguson

**John and William Gucker**  
Alice Gucker

**Tony Joseph**  
Bonnie Crawford  
and Family  
Joan Morrison

**Jim Killeen**  
Jackson and Loraine  
Bowling

William Dyrek  
Elizabeth Flynn  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Brendan Killeen  
Colleen LaVigne  
Olavo and Carolyn Macedo  
Hugh and Linda Russ  
Melissa Schaefer  
Stevens Transport

**Jane Kitchenman**  
Judith Kiley

**Nelson Leenhouts**  
Arlene Leenhouts

**Christine Lucacci**  
Bob and Dee Lucacci

**Lisa Anne Lucacci**  
Bob and Dee Lucacci

**Amanda Marshall**  
Martha Rutowski

**Rose Maxwell**  
Drew and Jennison  
Bielemeier

Don and Karen Bonner  
Anne Brett  
Louise and James Brown  
Jillian Carter  
Kim and Tim Clark  
Marisa Geitner  
Julie Owen and Jeff Cook  
Mark and Nancy  
Zawacki

**Thomas McManis**  
Gary McManis

**Mary Ann Miller**  
Dr. and Mrs. Tom Miller

**David Nenno**  
Shirley Meston

**Brian Nicholson**  
Tom and Jeanne Myers

**George Palmer**  
Victoria Hong and  
Vito Buscemi

**Judy Pawlik**  
Linda Pawlik

**Danny Phillips**  
Sandra Ashby  
Patricia Ford

Kathleen Lansberry  
Nancy Phillips

**Ronald Smay**  
Ed and Carol Seitz

**Katie Speicher**  
Mary Beth and Shaun  
Speicher

**Amy Tessoni**  
Judith Kiley

**Patricia Wayne**  
Tara Cross  
L A Dewey  
Jared Macary  
Kelly and Chris Nash  
Alecia Swasy

**Sandra, Frances and  
Howard Wissick**  
Howard McGinn

## IN HONOR OF

**Samantha Cashimere**  
Christina Cashimere-Brown  
and David Brown

**Angela Cataldi's Birthday**  
Nancy Odonaghue  
Mary Rinere

**Nancy Cataldi's Birthday**  
Jessica Cataldi  
Mary Rinere

**Kim Gagarinas**  
Nina Somers

# HERITAGE HERO

Heritage Christian Services hosted the Heritage Hero Run + Stroll + Roll on Saturday, Sept. 27, at the new location of Ontario Beach Park. Runners enjoyed the triple-loop course, and walkers and families took in the scenic location during a day

of fun and community spirit. Cristina Dermody, a member of the fundraising group Team Addie, participated in the event and has a deep connection to our agency. "Heritage Christian Services is an organization you can lean on. It makes such a difference just knowing people are there for our family that I can reach out to when we need support," she said. Because of the generosity and dedication of the Heritage Christian community, we raised over \$90,000. †

Many thanks to all of the sponsors that helped make this event possible, including:



Fundraising group Team Addie at the Heritage Hero Run + Stroll + Roll.

# GOLF CLASSIC



Geoff Cook of Taylor, The Builders, teamed up with Mike Baker of Weckesser Brick and Jesse Champagne of Gallagher Insurance.

## 35th Annual Golf Classic

Business professionals and community members gathered at Monroe Golf Club for the Heritage Christian Services Golf Classic, presented by Lawley. We raised over \$188,000, which will make a meaningful impact in the lives of people who choose our services and the dedicated staff members who support them. †

Thank you to all of the sponsors that helped make this event possible, including:



INSURANCE | EMPLOYEE BENEFITS



The builders.



**Mary and Paul Gately**  
Thomas and Judy  
Walbert

**Libbie Hard**  
Deborah A. Hard

**Garrett Hopkin**  
Courtney and  
Justin Hopkin

**Drew Hoselton's  
Birthday**  
Coralie Hoselton

**Andrew Hulbert**  
Erin Gimbel

**Becca McColl**  
Marna Distaffen

**Laura Nenko**  
Shirley Meston

**Beth Palmer**  
Mario Buscemi

**Mickey Ritzenthaler**  
Larry and Barb  
Ritzenthaler

**Nancy Tantalio**  
Elaine Tantalio

**Michael Thumm's  
Birthday**  
Barbara Thumm

**April Ward**  
Bill and Vicky Ward

**Terry Wihlen**  
Stacey Chapman  
UnitedHealth Group †

## OBITUARIES



**Mimi Dundon** was known for sharing her gifts of quick wit, artistry and style. She passed away on Aug. 4 at the age of 69. †



**Roseanne Maxwell**, affectionately known as Rose, had a radiant smile and shared joy and love with everyone she met. She passed away on Aug. 12 at the age of 59. †



**Naomi Goldberg**, one of the first people to call Goodburlet home, brought joy and light to every room she entered. She passed away Aug. 30 at the age of 64. †



**Annie Weber** was a compassionate woman with a sharp wit and warm laugh. She passed away on Sept. 1 at the age of 58. †



**Catherine Cecilia O'Brien**, affectionately known as Cece, loved learning and radiated kindness and joy. She passed away on Sept. 23 at the age of 63. †



**Kenny Howlett** was a man of faith who built strong connections with people. strong connections with those around him. He passed away Oct. 21 at the age of 49. †



**HERITAGE**  
CHRISTIAN SERVICES

People of possibility

**SPiRiT** is a biannual publication of Heritage Christian Services.

**AT HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SERVICES,  
WE BELIEVE IN ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.**

Established in 1984, Heritage Christian Services strives to advance an inclusive and equitable community. Our more than 3,600 employees work alongside the people who choose our services, ensuring that everyone can achieve what is meaningful to them. Based in Rochester, with concentrations in the Finger Lakes and western New York, we're innovating and expanding as the needs of our community grow. We serve our community with programs that promote housing options and the support within them, in addition to programs that sustain relevant employment and day habilitation. We have also established programs for high-quality childcare, setting the standard for statewide workforce education, ensuring robust health, wellness and equity, and embracing self-empowerment.

Visit [HeritageChristianServices.org](http://HeritageChristianServices.org).

### OUR INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

A Second Thought Resale Shop  
Eleversity | Employment Alliance  
Expressive Beginnings Child Care  
Ferncliff Apartments and Heritage Gardens  
Heritage Christian Stables  
Heritage Hollow Retreat Center  
International Ministries | Pieters Family Life Center  
Springdale Farm and Balcony Point

### OFFICES

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Suite 100  
Rochester, NY 14623  
Tel: (585) 340-2000

#### REGIONAL

130 John Muir Dr.,  
Suite 106  
Amherst, NY 14228  
Tel: (716) 743-2020

TDD: (800) 662-1220



Office for People With  
Developmental Disabilities  
A Compass Agency



### OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY & JUSTICE

We believe that people are entitled to dignity, respect, equity and justice. We champion a society that removes barriers. We reject racism and discrimination of any kind. We protest systemic and political inequities that marginalize people, recognizing that there is a history of structural racism in the United States. We will continue to learn and change to achieve justice. We know that strength comes from unity.

## An Evening of Joy: Gala Holiday Pops Concert with the RPO



**RPO**

**7:30 p.m.**  
**Thursday, Dec. 18**  
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre  
26 Gibbs St., Rochester, NY 14604

**Premier Seat: \$50 | Balcony Seat: \$25**

Secure your spot at [RPOwithHCS.org](http://RPOwithHCS.org) now through Dec. 12.

Questions? Contact Chloe Kay at (585) 340-5715  
or [Chloe.Kay@HeritageChristianServices.org](mailto:Chloe.Kay@HeritageChristianServices.org)

HCS is proud to partner with Rochester Rotary  
to host this private Gala Holiday Pops Concert  
with the RPO.

## Holiday Tree Lighting Reception

Purchase a light in honor or memory of someone  
special to help our evergreen trees shine.

**5-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3**

Pieters Family Life Center, 1025 Commons Way, Rochester, NY 14623

## If you're able, join us for the annual reception.

Learn more and purchase your lights at [HeritageChristianServices.org/light](http://HeritageChristianServices.org/light) or contact  
Mackenzie Schayes at (585) 340-5798 or [Mackenzie.Schayes@HeritageChristianServices.org](mailto:Mackenzie.Schayes@HeritageChristianServices.org).

# Turning Generosity into Legacy



## *The Walter Hubbell Home Endowment Fund*

Heritage Christian Services is honored to announce the creation of the Walter Hubbell Home Endowment Fund, established from a generous gift from the Walter Hubbell Employment Services Fund.

This newly-endowed \$250,000 fund will ensure that, for generations to come, we can provide financial resources for direct support professionals' fair and equitable compensation.

By strengthening resources for wages and recognition, the Walter Hubbell Home Endowment Fund, in support of the Walter Hubbell Home in Perinton, affirms the value of talented professionals and reinforces our commitment to attracting and retaining the best caregivers. It is an investment not only in staff members, but also in the people and families who rely on their dedication. †

**For more information on ways  
to support our mission, visit  
[HeritageChristianServices.org/donate](https://HeritageChristianServices.org/donate).**

### **Heritage Christian Services**

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