

Golisano FOUNDATION

NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Rochester is Leading the Way to Spread the Word to End the R-Word on March 2

*Golisano Foundation Launches the 6th Annual Campaign
Around the National Day of Awareness*

**SPREAD THE WORD
TO END THE WORD.**

03.02.16

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- February 17, 2016 -- For the sixth year, the [Golisano Foundation](#) is challenging the Rochester community to Spread the Word to End the R-Word™.

The campaign, which has become one of the largest in the country for a single region, is being held on the national [Spread the Word to End the Word](#) day of awareness on March 2. It 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 to people with developmental disabilities. Spread the Word to End the Word was started by youth and is an ongoing effort of Special Olympics International and Best Buddies.



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.

To date many local organizations are planning [Spread the Word to End the Word](#) pledge activities. Additional activities will be updated on [our web site](#):

University of Rochester Medical Center

- Strong Café 401 featuring Gregory Street Blues Band
- Eastman Institute for Oral Health Atrium

Golisano Children's Hospitals and Health Centers

- Golisano Center for Community Health, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical
- Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, Lee Memorial Health System, Fort. Myers, FL
- Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital, Syracuse, NY
- UR Medicine's Golisano Children's Hospital, Rochester, NY

Area Public Schools

- Baytrail Middle School (Penfield)
- Pittsford Mendon High School

Area Colleges and Universities

- Monroe Community College
- Nazareth College
- RIT
- Roberts Wesleyan College
- St. John Fisher College
- UR Warner School - Institute for Innovative Transition

Local Catholic High Schools

- Bishop Kearney High School
- McQuaid High School
- Mercy High School

Local Human Service Providers

- Al Sigi Community of Agencies
- Monroe Arc Gregory Street Blues Band
- Special Olympics Genesee Region
- Starbridge
- The Strong National Museum of Play

"Most people who use the words retard or retarded do not mean to be hurtful, 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'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."

"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."

How to Organize a Pledge Event

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, companies 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 egleason@golisanofoundation.org.

Social Media

The Foundation will also be following along on social media. Tag us in your pictures and tweets on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtags *#respect* and *#rword*.

([@GolisanoFdn](https://twitter.com/GolisanoFdn) / facebook.com/GolisanoFoundation)

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 \$32 million in assets and has awarded more than \$20 million in grants, about \$1.5 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, the Foundation envisions communities that 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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