

GOLISANO FOUNDATION

News

For Immediate Release

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Golisano Foundation Challenges Rochester to Spread the Word to End the “R” Word



Rochester, NY –March 5, 2012—
After a huge outpouring of support for its campaign last year, the Golisano Foundation is once again challenging the Rochester community to *Spread the Word to End the Word™* to show its love and create a more accepting world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have unique gifts and talents to share with the world.

The Golisano Foundation and Special Olympics International are partnering over the next two weeks to *Spread the Word to End the Word™* - a campaign that aims to build awareness for thinking about and making a stand against using the R-word - “retard” or “retarded,” a word that has gained popularity in culture, but is offensive and hurtful to many.

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 to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the word “retard(ed)” and encourage people to pledge to stop using the R-word.

“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.”

Costello said that the awareness campaign includes TV and radio public service announcements featuring Tom Golisano, Chairman of the Golisano Foundation that will air leading up to and following the national day of awareness on March 7. People can help spread the word and take the pledge year-round in their communities and schools through a number of activities.

How Take the Pledge!

Go to www.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 www.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 nation devoted exclusively to supporting programs for people with developmental disabilities so that they may achieve their maximum potentials by integrating independence, self-determination, and productivity into all facets of their lives.

Recent funding has helped launch of the Institute for Innovative Transition at the University of Rochester Medical Center’s Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, Project SEARCH at Golisano Children’s Hospital, “Train the Trainer” for Special Olympics and the first Leadership Awards for Providing Exemplary Healthcare Services to People with Developmental Disabilities. For more information see www.golisanofoundation.org.

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