Upstate Cerebral Palsy
Designated a
New York State
Center of Excellence

The Upstate Cerebral Palsy Children’s Residential Program (CRP) has been designated a New York State Center of Excellence in the care and treatment of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other complex disabilities. There are only two other providers in New York State that share this distinction. Recognized as an exemplar in best practice for those children who present mental health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder as well as other cognitive and intellectual disorders, Upstate Cerebral Palsy staff will contribute to a best practice training curriculum to share with other CRP programs across the state. Upstate Cerebral Palsy will also serve as a resource for treatment protocols, educational resources, and applied research to advance the care of people with ASD and complex disabilities for New York State and beyond.

This initiative will create a comprehensive and coordinated system for responding to the growing needs presented by children with ASD and other complex disabilities. The establishment of a collaborative network of CRP providers with significant capacity to care for children with the most severe and complex disabilities will enable the sharing of research, the identification and use of clinical and performance metrics, and development of best practices in all aspects of treating complex needs patients. The sharing of best practices in treatment and discharge planning across these Centers will contribute to the fulfillment of community residential goals for these children allowing them to reach their fullest potential.

The Centers of Excellence will draw upon the collective expertise and knowledge in the specialty care models that the Upstate Cerebral Palsy CRPs have developed over many decades. Initial planning in the creation of these Centers will require collaboration with the NYS Department of Health to ensure the greatest return on the investment being made in the Centers. Over time, the Centers will become a resource not only for the State, but others as they develop treatment protocols, education resources, and applied research to advance the care of people with ASD and complex disabilities.
Message from Louis B. Tehan
President and CEO

As we begin this new year and reflect back on the successes of 2015, I am pleased to report that the overwhelming theme for the past year has been growth. Like all families who expand over time, our family continues to grow exponentially as we acquire new affiliate agencies to join our Parent Corporation, Upstate Caring Partners. In a time when resources for developmental disability agencies all across the state are scarce, budgets are tight with looming cuts around every corner and in an environment when regulatory agencies often overshadow and undercut our very mission and vision at every turn, seemingly without realizing who is really being affected, the time for partnership, innovation and collaboration is now. Our family has grown...we are now eight affiliates strong and continuing to expand.

The affiliates of Upstate Caring Partners include Upstate Cerebral Palsy, the Kelberman Center, Cerebral Palsy Association, Mohawk Valley Handicapped Services, The E. John Gavras Center, Central New York Health Home Network, Care Management of Central New York and The Root Farm. These affiliates will allow for continued collaboration on a whole new level, with a greater presence than ever before. Our geographical reach of Auburn to Lowville, Little Falls to Watertown encompasses all of Central New York and beyond with 84 locations and affiliate budgets exceeding $100,000,000 in 2016. Upstate Caring Partners will be at the forefront of change, leadership and advocacy as we continue to create new and exciting programs and opportunities well into the future.

And while our family has grown, we remain true to our philosophy of “Everyday Miracles”...because there truly are miracles happening everyday throughout all of our affiliate agencies. Whether it be a child with Spina Bifida building muscle strength while riding a horse, a family struggling with multiple health issues now being able to receive help and coordination of all services through one point of contact, or an adult with autism attending a social skills group and making friends for the first time, these are the miracles that we celebrate everyday. So while the last year has been monumental with expansion, growth and new and exciting changes, we look forward to the future which holds even more promise for thousands of children, adults and their families that we are so proud to serve. Happy and Healthy New Year from our family to yours!

New Year...New Website!

With the ushering in of 2016, and with an Upstate Cerebral Palsy that is stronger and more diversified than ever before, the time was right for a new and fresh website. The agency has grown exponentially over the past few years and refreshed content and a new format will serve to compliment this ever growing and ever changing organization. Enjoy the new www.upstatecp.org coming in early 2016 and learn more about the children and adults whose incredible stories of hope and perseverance are what make the organization what it is today - one that continually empowers people through exceptional opportunities.
For over 30 years, Upstate Cerebral Palsy has been an area leader in providing therapy and developmental enrichment to infants and toddlers from birth to age three. The Early Intervention Program includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy services, special education, and service coordination for families throughout the area. Despite a challenging fiscal environment, Upstate Cerebral Palsy is determined to not only maintain its commitment to the youngest individuals, but to expand and enhance services with an eye to research-based practices.

One of the new Upstate Caring Partners affiliate agencies, the E. John Gavras Center, located in Auburn NY, provides educational, habilitative and therapeutic services for preschool children to adults with developmental and physical disabilities. The E. John Gavras Center was founded in 1953 by physical therapist John Gavras and began as a small clinic, a therapeutic program for disabled children, in the Auburn Memorial Hospital. In much the same way as Upstate Cerebral Palsy began, the Gavras Center clinic was inspired by parents of children with developmental and physical disabilities who wanted another choice in care for their children.

The E. John Gavras Center has grown dramatically over the past ten years offering a variety of programs and services to adults. Most recently, The Gavras Center has joined The Upstate Caring Partners family as an affiliate agency, a collaboration that will strengthen Gavras’ growth and services for people with special needs. Newly appointed Executive Director, Danielle Ambrose, has worked at the E. John Gavras Center for 16 years in a financial capacity, having initially been connected through a family member who required services. According to Ambrose, ‘Some of our individuals have jobs, they volunteer, all kinds of things they want to do in the community. We’re able to support them while they’re out in the community so it opens up more choice for them, which we’re always excited about.’ Congratulations to Danielle as she embarks upon this well-deserved new chapter of leadership at the E. John Gavras Center and within the Upstate Caring Partners family.

At the start of 2015, the agency entered into a collaboration with early intervention experts at Utica College with the goal of creating a model of best practice and a path to sustained growth for the program. Faculty from the college’s therapy and education programs as well as graduate students are working together with agency early intervention professionals.

Upstate Cerebral Palsy has been an organization that families look to for guidance when they suspect their child may not be developing at a pace they expect or when they receive a diagnosis that can mean challenges ahead. The information and services provided are grounded in solid research and carried out by professionals who are continually updating their knowledge base. The resources at Utica College give us the opportunity to analyze our program objectively, conduct research, and provide educational experiences for our practitioners.

At the same time, Utica College students, some of whom may be future early intervention practitioners themselves, gain valuable exposure to the field and experience conducting research with very real implications for their own communities. Providing a model of excellence in early intervention is our goal and one that is sure to be challenging in the face of state budget cuts, regulatory hurdles, and the logistics of providing services across a large geographic area. But we have learned from the very children and families we encounter in our program that challenges sometimes are the catalyst for change and innovative approaches and partnerships can help us meet our goals.
Congratulations to the Tradewinds Education Center robotics team, the VoBots, which recently competed at the regional robotics competition at Sauquoit Valley High School and came in 12th out of 24 local and regional teams.

The purpose of the robotics program at Upstate Cerebral Palsy and throughout the State is to help students not only learn the engineering, science, and math basics involved with mechanics and robotics, but also focus on teamwork and following directions. During competitions, students are scored on the performance of the robot, as well as on sportsmanship, cooperation, and interactions with other teams. According to Upstate Cerebral Palsy Senior Vice President of Education Services, Nancy Seller, “Our students are being exposed to and working with a very unique and high level robotics program. We are so proud of their accomplishments and of the fact that they are collaborating with other areas schools and students, creating ongoing partnerships.”

Staff throughout Upstate Caring Partners are truly exceptional when it comes to giving back to the children and adults they support. A few years ago Upstate Cerebral Palsy embarked on an internal fund-raising campaign among staff, the first of its kind at the agency. The Campaign to Make a Difference was developed to provide employees an opportunity to directly support the agency mission through donating to a new fund to benefit the people we support and offer experiences that otherwise would not be possible due to budgetary restraints. This money is used to fund new and innovative opportunities for individuals receiving services at Upstate Cerebral Palsy and all affiliates of Upstate Caring Partners. Thanks to the incredible generosity and caring nature of staff, over $20,000 was raised last year for this fund. This outpouring of support is proof that staff is dedicated to improving the lives of every individual at the agency. Staff is encouraged to submit ideas and requests to put their money to work, making a difference for people and programs. Donating to help establish a new program, buy a needed piece of equipment or send an individual on a trip, reflects the loving and caring attitude that our employees demonstrate every day! Grants to programs and individuals receiving services last year resulted in a trip to The Great Escape for Utica and Rome Tradewinds students, an outdoor basketball hoop for residents in the Kelberman IRA, a Rifton adaptive tricycle for a young boy receiving services from the agency TRAID program and enhancements to the infant day care room. Thank you to staff for directly impacting children and adults at the agency!
It’s who we are!
It’s how we work!
It’s how much we care!

The Upstate Cerebral Palsy Professional Development Institute (PDI) Foundations of Leadership Program was created ten years ago to empower staff at all levels and in all positions of the agency. The premise of the program was, and still is, rooted in the belief that every person has the capability to be a leader in his or her role. Instruction is based on developing each employee’s potential and in creating a sense of ownership and responsibility that guides our employees each day. The program invites staff on a journey of personal exploration, understanding and development, focusing on qualities, characteristics, and core skills needed to create a strong foundation for leadership. Understanding the essence of effective leadership assists individuals with creating a strong base for a successful team. The Professional Development Institute also provides the tools that are needed to motivate, communicate and influence when interacting with staff, peers, and other leaders throughout the agency. Staff development is integral to providing the best care and services to those we support and we congratulate our latest graduates from the 2015 class.

The Upstate Cerebral Palsy Professional Development Institute Foundations of Leadership

Celebrating Direct Support Professionals

Upstate Cerebral Palsy recently recognized national Direct Support Professionals Week, designated to show appreciation for the work of employees caring for individuals with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the backbone of the agency, supporting individuals on a daily basis in all areas of their lives. DSPs work directly with people to assist them in becoming integrated into the community and reaching their fullest potential. DSPs at Upstate Cerebral Palsy include Resident Counselors, School Aides, Human Services Aides, Human Services Practitioners, Teacher Aides, Community Habilitation Aides and others who provide these types of direct supports. In honor of the hard work and dedication of agency DSPs, Upstate Cerebral Palsy held a series of appreciation celebrations at multiple agency locations as a small thank you for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of the individuals we support.
Giving Back...

Volunteer in one of our programs

You can make a difference in the lives of children and adults throughout the year! Volunteer at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, the Kelberman Center, The Root Farm or another affiliate agency and help give back to the community. These agencies are looking for motivated and enthusiastic volunteers to help create everyday miracles for the children, teens and adults who receive services. Volunteers can participate in a variety of activities and projects including sports and recreation programs, working with preschool and school-age children, clerical work and helping riders at The Root Farm. Opportunities are available for individuals, community groups or groups of co-workers interested in one-day projects/special events or volunteering on a regular basis. According to a volunteer at The Root Farm, “Volunteering at the farm is a great experience. Working with the individuals and the horses is something that I always look forward to each week. I get back so much more in return and really enjoy my time in the stables.” For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact Alexa Aiello at 315.724.6907, ext. 2276 or alexa.aiello@upstatecp.org.

Looking to give back from the comfort of your home?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way to support these agencies while shopping online. Many people use Amazon.com for their everyday purchases already, so this is a great way to do this while supporting a worthwhile cause. Shopping at smile.amazon.com throughout the year is the same shopping experience as at Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the charitable organization. Visit smile.amazon.com, log in and then select a charity in ‘My Account.’ Just search for Upstate Cerebral Palsy (listed as United), The Kelberman Center or The Root Farm. Amazon will remember these settings and each time will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from the eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Thank you for giving back throughout the year!

Rotary Club of Utica

Congratulations to Dawn Gentile, Director of Vocational Services at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, who was recently awarded the ‘Pride of Workmanship’ Award from the Rotary Club of Utica. The award recognizes nominees who demonstrate outstanding competence, a commitment to excellence, professionalism and a willingness to go above and beyond their job description. As the Director of Vocational Services at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, Dawn is instrumental in assisting individuals receiving agency services in securing meaningful and fulfilling employment within the community. Thank you Dawn for your dedication to our agency vision of empowering people through exceptional opportunities.

Caring Person of the Year Award

Anthony Spiridigloizzi

Community Partners of the Year Award

Paul and Lori Totaro

John F. Buffa, Anthony Spiridigloizzi, and Louis B. Tehan

Robert Myers, Beth Myers, Lori Totaro and Paul Totaro

Giving Back...
Upstate Cerebral Palsy Recognizes Outstanding Staff and Supporters

Upstate Cerebral Palsy staff and community members were honored for their commitment and dedication to making life better for children and adults each day!

The Nancy Corelli Employee of the Year Award
Mariangela Pecheone & Francine Rose

The Al Felmet Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have overcome the challenges of Cerebral Palsy and whose achievements are an inspiration to others. The 2015 award was presented to Michael Ellis for his contributions and impact as an employee and volunteer of Upstate Cerebral Palsy.

INSPIRATION AWARD
ED GROVE

Team of the Year Award
HABILITATION SERVICES

Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State
Al Felmet Award

The Al Felmet Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have overcome the challenges of Cerebral Palsy and whose achievements are an inspiration to others. The 2015 award was presented to Michael Ellis for his contributions and impact as an employee and volunteer of Upstate Cerebral Palsy.

Dollars for Scholars

Bruce Brodsky, a long term employee at Upstate Cerebral Palsy in the Information Technology department, was recently selected by Scholarship America® as one of two National Finalists for the 2015 Ralph “Cy” Seifert National Volunteer of the Year. The Volunteer of the Year award honors and recognizes individual Dollars for Scholars affiliate volunteers who are instrumental in successfully guiding the course of Dollars for Scholars, a program of Scholarship America, in a significant and beneficial way. “Dollars for Scholars is the program it is today because of volunteers like Bruce, who are passionate about helping students achieve their dreams,” said Bob Ballard, President/CEO of Scholarship America. Since its founding in 1994, Utica Dollars for Scholars has distributed nearly $500,000 to over 1,200 students at Proctor, Notre Dame and many other high schools in Oneida and Herkimer counties.

Absent from photo: Rachel Jacobson
The Power of Choice

Upstate Caring Partners prides itself on treating every child and adult who comes through its doors as an individual with unique needs, interests, preferences and opinions. Individuals transitioning from one setting to another, whether moving from school to work, from home with parents to an adult living situation, from a group home to an independent living opportunity, or from a day program to work environment, deserve the opportunity to create their own unique destiny through Self Directed Services. Self Direction allows individuals and their families to plan and access services through an annual budget that they design to meet their individualized needs. With the support of their planning team, individuals who choose Self Direction can either self hire their direct care staff, or access agency supported services for Respite, Community Habilitation, and Supported Employment. The program offers the family or individual the ability to control a personal budget as well as the ability to hire, schedule, and supervise the people who support him or her. The individual is empowered to choose the mix of supports and services, how and when they are provided, and choose the staff that provides them. Funding for many other goods and services can be built into the plan including horseback riding, summer camps, and community classes such as art, dance, exercise, cooking and computer training. According to Mary Beth Redmond, Vice President of Community Services, “Upstate Cerebral Palsy has always been a leader in providing person centered planning to support people in living a meaningful life. Individuals choose their own goals and work toward them in their own time and with their own methods. This system is extremely person centered, as it should be.” For more information on accessing self-directed services at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, please contact Colleen Orsino, Asst. Director of Self Directed-Family Support Services, at 315.323.6621 or colleen.orsino@upstatecp.org.

New Non-Certified Home

As a leader in the human service industry, Upstate Cerebral Palsy has often gone above and beyond when it comes to new and innovative programs to support the children and adults at the agency. This fact is what makes such a profound impact in people’s lives. The agency builds its programs around individuals, instead of trying to fit an individual into a pre-existing program. Recently, Upstate Cerebral Palsy embarked upon one of its most ground breaking and monumental projects ever – the purchase and renovation of a residence that will be among the first of its kind in New York State. The local residence will be home to four young men and will be a Non-Certified home. The home is being developed under the auspice of Upstate Cerebral Palsy’s Self Directed Services program. Self Direction allows individuals and their families the ability to plan, develop and design services and supports that are customized to each person’s individual needs. Funding for those services are provided through an annual budget which is developed in conjunction with OPWDD, the individual and the self direction agency. Unlike traditional certified residential programs, an uncertified residence has no special certifications which makes it more like a regular home. Although there are guidelines for the services offered in the residence, there are many fewer regulations, which provide a much more typical family like living environment. The home includes many “Smart Home” features and technology, making it a show case for other families considering this option for residential care. Contact Mary Beth Redmond, Vice President of Community Services at 315.404.6868 or marybeth.redmond@upstatecp.org.

Mental Health Clinic at Veteran’s Outreach Center

City of Utica Mayor Palmieri announced the collaboration of Upstate Cerebral Palsy and the Veteran’s Outreach Center on the opening of a mental health clinic within the Center, located at 726 Washington Street in Utica. A press conference was held in October at the Veteran’s Outreach Center to coincide with the clinic’s opening. Mayor Palmieri has been actively involved in initiatives to end Veteran’s homelessness in the Utica area, including joining the White House’s Mayor’s Challenge, designed to remove barriers to affordable housing for Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness.

The new Mental Health Clinic will also connect qualified veterans to a variety of additional services including supportive housing assistance, primary care services, therapeutic horseback riding through The Root Farm, emergency housing through the Rapid Engagement Homeless Assistance Team (REHAT), and care management services provided by Central New York Health Network, Inc. Clinic hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm. Walk in appointments will be provided Mondays from 1:00pm until 3:00pm. All referrals to the clinic will be received through the intake coordinator at the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Community Health and Behavioral Services main office, located at 1427 Genesee Street. Please call 315.798.8869 to schedule an appointment.
Expanding Services

The Kelberman Center is constantly growing and expanding to reach new and often under served populations of individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The Center has recently expanded its Intensive Behavioral Support program in the Syracuse, Utica and Madison County areas through the addition of four new Behavior Specialists and Clinicians. The Intensive Behavioral Support program provides behavioral consultation and planning by a psychologist for families who are in crisis due to high intensity behavioral episodes in the home. This program provides home-based intensive, individualized functional behavioral assessment and intervention for individuals with developmental disabilities, specifically autism spectrum disorder. Staff and caregivers also receive support and training that will allow them to work with individuals in the home and community, often avoiding the need for more intensive treatment and crisis placement. The program can be accessed through your local Developmental Regional Office by a referral made through your Medicaid Service Coordinator. Please contact Sarah Puskarenko, Kelberman Center Coordinator, at 315.797.6241, ext. 224 for more information.

Transitions to Adulthood

Life’s transitions are often difficult for people to manage successfully, and this is especially true for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, who see transitions as road blocks. The Kelberman Center has introduced a new program to help young adults transition into the world of higher education and career training. Through a partnership with Syracuse University, the Center is training and supervising SU students to be Peer Mentors for fellow SU students with disabilities. The Peer Mentors will concentrate on assisting and supporting their classmates in the areas of organization, planning, social engagement and logistics. Currently, 14 students are enrolled in the program and enrollment is expected to increase significantly in the summer and fall semesters. The Kelberman Center is excited about this new program and looks forward to supporting an increased number of students in years to come.

Kelberman Center Recreation

Recreational activities are fundamental to a healthy lifestyle and can improve one’s quality of life. The Kelberman Center Recreation department plans new and innovative programs for the many children and adults in the program. One of the hallmarks of the Kelberman Center is its Awesome Summer Days Camp. The camp was originally designed to support children with autism spectrum disorder and related learning challenges. However, the program has expanded and currently includes children of all abilities from 3 to 14 years of age. This integration allows for enhanced social skill opportunities for all children involved.

During this winter season the Kelberman Center is providing recreation programs including Friday evening respite; snowshoeing at the Utica Zoo; a Wii Challenge; tween and teen girls and boys groups; school break day respite services; yoga, Autism Movement Therapy classes; and a sensory-friendly movie at the Marquee Theater. The popular Saturday morning program, Kelberman Clubhouse, will begin again in February. Please visit kelbermancenter.org to view a monthly recreation newsletter and calendar of events or to register. You may also call 315.797.6241, ext. 253 to register.
The Root Farm celebrated its official grand opening in November with overwhelming community support! Over 400 children and adults stopped by throughout the day to see the new facility, meet the horses, watch live vaulting demos and take tours of the farm. Daily operations have since gotten underway at The Root Farm and each day is filled with riding lessons, equine therapy, horticulture activities such as harvesting eggs and tours from school and community groups. Recently, a group of Veterans from Fort Drum spent a day vaulting with the horses and therapy team at The Root Farm, proving to be a very powerful experience for everyone involved. This positive impact is common among many people who ride.

According to one mother of a child receiving services, ‘My son absolutely loves all the people and horses at The Root Farm. We have seen great improvement in his balance and overall core strength and can definitely see a difference if he has a few weeks off for any reason. It’s amazing to see how much equine therapy works and helps with such a wide variety of challenges for people of all ages.’

Equine therapy and riding in general does have an amazing impact on those who experience it! Sessions at The Root Farm are now available for booking, including private lessons, adaptive riding, recreation riding, therapeutic riding and vaulting. There are day and evening time slots available for year round riding. Register or receive more information by contacting Gillian Albicker at 315.520.7046 or info@rootfarm.org.
Winter is a time of celebration for the children and adults at Upstate Cerebral Palsy. Eagerly awaiting an opportunity to dress up and to socialize with friends, the annual winter ball is a chance to participate in something magical. Thanks to the generosity of the Knights of Columbus in New York Mills for the use of their building, nearly 150 individuals and their families enjoyed a wonderful time at the ball. Attending a formal dance is an activity that most people are able to experience at one point or another in their lives. The individuals at Upstate Cerebral Palsy are no different, realizing the benefits that come with movement, interaction with friends combined with the excitement of the holiday season.

In addition to the many smiles at the winter ball, over 200 children from the agency are smiling after receiving special gifts for the holidays through the agency Holiday Miracles program. The agency often has children receiving services who, due to financial hardship or to not being in contact with their families, have the potential to go without during the holidays. The generosity of community members makes all the difference in the lives of children who are often already faced with everyday challenges and hurdles. According to one mother, “Seeing my daughter’s face light up as she opened her gifts, and knowing that there was an amazingly caring individual out there who was able to do this for my child, that was the greatest gift I could have ever received.” For more information on ways to get involved at Upstate Cerebral Palsy each holiday and throughout the year, please contact Alexa Aiello at 315.724.6907, ext. 2276 or alexa.aiello@upstatecp.org.
Please visit www.upstatecp.org to find out how you can make a difference in the lives of the people we support through participating in our fundraising events, becoming a volunteer, or making a donation. Together, we can help create everyday miracles in the lives of people with differing abilities.