

GOLISANO FOUNDATION

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Many Rochester Events Scheduled to Spread the Word to End the R-Word



ROCHESTER, N.Y. - February 27, 2015 - For the fifth 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 nation for a single region, is being held around the national [Spread the Word to End the Word](#) day of awareness on March 4th. 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.

Here's what's happening around Rochester to spread the word!

Sunday March 1

- **Rochester Lancers Game** - BlueCross Arena, 4PM Game Start. Look for Special Olympics Athletes and The Advocacy Center representatives will be manning a table near the entrance where people can take the pledge.
- *R-Word Activities Media Contact: Onolee Stephen, 585-519-3070*

Monday March 2 - Friday March 6

- **Monroe Community College Damon Campus**
- **University of Rochester River Campus** is organizing multiple events on campus to encourage people to be kind to one another and use respectful language - specifically, to try and remove/discourage use of the "R-Word" in our campus community and raise awareness of why words matter. Activities include:
 - I choose to #endtheRword because..." whiteboard photo campaign
 - Info pledge center in Wilson Commons
 - Banners and signs around campus
 - "Post-Secret" style box: At the info table in Wilson Commons will be a box in which campus community members can share anonymous personal stories about when the R-word (or any derogatory language) was used in a hurtful way. After 3/4/15, peoples' stories will be compiled on a large poster and placed in a public area for campus to see.
- *R-Word Activities Media Contact at UR is: Catherine Lewis, Assistant Director Rochester Center for Community Leadership, (585) 275-8172, catherine.lewis@rochester.edu*

Wednesday March 4

National R-Word Awareness Day Pledge Campaign Activities are taking place at the following locations:

- **Bay Trail Middle School**, Penfield, students involved in multiple activities assisted by The Advocacy Center
- **Eastman Institute for Oral Health**, Main Street Sibley Bldg, and at University of Rochester Medical Center, staffed by medical and dental students
- **Greater Rochester Collaboration** - SUNY Brockport and Nazareth, downtown campus at 55 St. Paul Street
- **Monroe Community Hospital**
- **Monroe Community College** Henrietta Campus
- **Nazareth College**, Main Campus, 4245 East Avenue, Rochester
- **Roberts Wesleyan College**, 2301 Westside Dr, Rochester
- **Rochester Institute of Technology**
- **University of Rochester Medical Center** and AADMD - DJ Lui, 10:30am - Noon, and Gregory Street Blues Band - 12pm to 1:30pm, Cafeteria
- **University of Rochester River Campus** (see above)

[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.

Additional activities will be updated on [our web site](#):

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.

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"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.

"With greater awareness Rochester is leading the way nationally, and inspiring 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."

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 info@golisanofoundation.org.

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 \$28 million in gross assets and has awarded more than \$17 million in grants, about \$1.2 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, it is our vision that communities will 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

