



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Easterseals Wisconsin Celebrates 100 Years of Empowering People with Disabilities

(MIDDLETON, Wis.) – Easterseals Wisconsin, a leading nonprofit dedicated to supporting people with disabilities and their families, proudly marks its centennial anniversary this year, celebrating 100 years of advocacy, inclusion, and life-changing support for individuals and families in the community.

Founded in 1926, Easterseals Wisconsin (originally The Wisconsin Association for the Disabled) began with a simple but powerful mission: to increase independence, maximize opportunities, minimize barriers, and enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities. Over the past century, the organization has grown from a small grassroots effort into a trusted institution serving thousands through programs that promote independence, education, vocational rehabilitation, accessibility, and community inclusion.

“For 100 years, our work has been guided by the belief that every person deserves the chance to live a full and meaningful life,” said Paul Leverenz, President & CEO of Easterseals Wisconsin. “This milestone is not only a celebration of our history, but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities as they work toward their goals and build the futures they envision.”

Throughout its history, Easterseals Wisconsin has adapted to changing needs and expanded its services to reflect the needs of the communities it serves. In 1938, Camp Wawbeek, located in Wisconsin Dells, was established after a generous land donation from the Upham family. The camp still stands as the longest, continuously run Easterseals camp in the nation. In 1989, the nationally renowned FARM Program was established to help farmers continue farming after a disabling accident or illness. In 1992, the Wisconsin Elks/Easterseals Wisconsin Respite Camp began due to a severe lack of respite services for families and caregivers in Wisconsin. Today, the organization continues to break down barriers by partnering with local businesses, educators, healthcare providers, and advocates to create pathways to independence and belonging.

To commemorate its centennial year, Easterseals Wisconsin will host a series of events and initiatives, including fundraising campaigns such as Wonderfully Human and the Easterseals Wisconsin Basketball Experience. These efforts honor the individuals, families, supporters, and staff who have shaped the organization's legacy and helped transform lives across generations. Visit their website to learn more about each opportunity.

“Looking ahead, we are inspired by the resilience and achievements of the people we serve,” added Pat LeMire, Chair of the Easterseals Wisconsin Board of Directors. “The next century will be defined by innovation, equity, and continued advocacy for a world where disability is never a barrier to opportunity.”

For more information about Easterseals Wisconsin and its centennial celebrations, or how to get involved or donate, visit www.eastersealswisconsin.com or contact Rachel Reichhoff, Director of Development, at rreichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com

About Easterseals Wisconsin

For 100 years, Easterseals Wisconsin has provided services that help children and adults with disabilities gain greater independence. Easterseals Wisconsin's primary services – vocational rehabilitation, respite services, camping and recreation, information and referral, and public education – benefit close to 10,000 individuals with disabilities and their families each year throughout Wisconsin.