



**1926** The Wisconsin Association for the Disabled, which is now Easterseals Wisconsin, was established, sponsoring orthopedic field clinics.

**1934** In the spring of 1934, the organization launched its first Easter "seals" campaign to raise funds for its services. Donors showed their support by placing these seals on envelopes and letters. Cartoonist J.H. Donahey from the Cleveland Plain Dealer designed the first seal, inspired by the right to live a "normal" life.



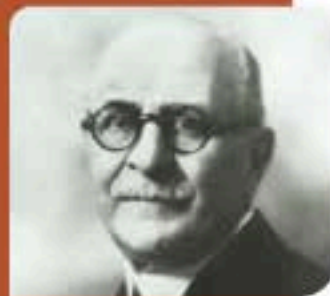
## 1919-1929

**1919** In 1907, Ohio businessman Edgar Allen lost his son in a streetcar accident. The inadequate medical services available to save his son prompted Allen to sell his business and launch a fundraising campaign to build a hospital in his hometown of Elyria, Ohio. Once the hospital was established, Allen was surprised to discover that the staff would often conceal children with disabilities from public view. Motivated to make a difference, Allen founded the **National Society for Crippled Children** in 1919, which became the first organization of its kind.



Your life and mine shall be valued not by what we take but by what we give. "

— Edgar Allen, Easterseals' Founder



## 1930-1939

**1938** In the mid 30's, after sponsoring orthopedic field clinics for nearly 10 years, the association was aware of the need to provide social and recreational experiences for people with disabilities. Pilot projects providing day camping activities had been developed in some counties, but the association sought to develop a statewide residential program that would offer more.

Not long after the search began, former association board member **Elizabeth Upham Davis** and her sister, **Caroline Upham Keene**, stepped forward to offer their family's beloved property, Wawbeek, on which the association could develop just such a facility. The Upham sisters wished for Wawbeek to live on as a tribute to their parents' service to others and Camp Wawbeek opened in the same year.

Beloved property of Upham family donated to the association and Camp Wawbeek opens.



**1941**

The Homebased Enterprise Program, mandated by state regulation, was conducted by the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR contracted with Easter Seals Wisconsin, establishing what became the Wisconsin Craftsmen program.

**1950**

Easter Seals organization achieved nationwide reach.



**1952**

By 1952, the lily, symbolizing new life and beginnings, was adopted as the logo of the National Society for Crippled Children, reflecting the organization's broader focus.



## 1940-1949

**1944** Easter Seals' mission was broadened to include assistance to adults.



## 1950-1959

**1957** Kiwanis fund the original accessible pool at Camp Wawbeek.



**1972**

First Easter Seals Wisconsin telethon is held.



**1979**

A new fence is installed at the Kiwanis re-dedication of the accessible pool at Camp Wawbeek.



**1990**

Easter Seals helped pass the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law.



**1995**

Disability HelpLine was established in Outagamie County, made possible by \$1 million Loretta Ricker trust.



**1960-1989**

**1990-1999**

**1967**

The Easter "seals" campaign spurred grassroots efforts nationwide. The "seal" became so iconic that the organization formally adopted the name "Easter Seals".

**1977**

Pioneer Camp established with the philosophy of making more options available to participate in challenging, off-site activities.



**1989**

Creation of the Resource Center for Farmers with Disabilities (RCFD).

**1991**

Through funding by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Easter Seals RCFD joined with the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension to form AgrAbility of Wisconsin.

**1992**

In response to an identified statewide need for respite services, Easter Seals Wisconsin, in partnership with the Wisconsin Elks, developed the Respite Program.



**1997**

The Donation Center was established in Southern Wisconsin to raise new funds for Easter Seals Wisconsin programs.



**2000**

Wisconsin Elks/Respite Camp grand opening of multipurpose building.



**2004**

First Easter Seals Wisconsin Capital Campaign completed; \$2.9 million raised for Camp Wawbeek.

Federal AmeriCorps grant allows expanding and enhancing of Camp Wawbeek and Respite programs.



**2010**

FARM Program began to train state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies nationwide through Federal NIDRR grant.

**2014**

Lois Hardt made a significant gift in support of the renovation of the pool at Camp Wawbeek, allowing for the addition of a splash pad and zero-entry access—major improvements over the previous 1979 renovation.

**2015**

FARM Program began project to help farmers develop succession plans for their farm operations through federal Beginning Farmer grant.



**2018**

Celebrity Basketball Experience event begins, spearheaded by two Board members.



## 2000-2019

**2000**

Easter Seals of Milwaukee Co. (directly affiliated with National Easter Seals) gains territory of five surrounding counties becoming Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin.

**2002**

Wisconsin Craftsmen stores closed when DVR discontinued funding after 61 years.

Easter Seals Wisconsin begins an agreement with DVR to triple services to farmers with disabilities statewide through the FARM Program and provide ongoing training to DVR staff.

**2005**

Self-Employment Services instituted to help entrepreneurs with disabilities find opportunities through self employment.



**2009** Veterans Family Camp launched at Easter Seals Wisconsin Camps.



**2017**

Easter Seals Wisconsin adapts the revitalized brand of Easterseals, Inc. (the national organization's most significant re-brand in over 50 years).



**2018**

Donation Center closes due to Savers leaving the Madison market. Drop-off donations still accepted in Eau Claire to date.

Kiwanis build accessible playground in celebration of Camp Wawbeek's 80th anniversary.

**2020**

The COVID pandemic impacts Easterseals Wisconsin, forcing us to pivot, prioritize, and serve in new and creative ways. The Annual Campaign had just kicked off, and major fundraising events were canceled. Summer camp was canceled, and programs were deeply impacted.

**2022**

Starry Night is reimagined to **Wonderfully Human**, becoming the new official launch event for the agency's Annual Campaign.



**2023**

A major **waterline replacement project**—updating nearly 100-year-old pipes at a cost of \$90,000—was completed thanks to the generosity of donors.

**2025**

Easterseals Wisconsin supports the annual **Portage County and Midstate Independent Living Choices Disability Pride Festival**—the first of its kind in Portage County—as a way to expand our footprint in the community.



1926-2026

**100** Years

EASTERSEALS WISCONSIN



## 2020-2026

**2021**

Easterseals Wisconsin leveraged the post-pandemic pause to reimagine our fundraising strategy, launching **Sporting Clays** to engage a new and distinct audience of donors.



**2023**

Miron Construction builds a **new accessible swing set** at **Respite Camp**, enhancing the experience for campers and families.



**2025**

The **Dane Co. Council of Snowmobiles** marked its **37-year partnership**, demonstrating its long-standing commitment to **Camp Wawbeek**.



**2025**

**Wonderfully Human** delivered the **highest-grossing event in our organization's history**, raising more in a single evening than ever before.



**2026**

Transformational gifts from two families funded **substantial renovations** to the **Men's Dorm** and the **Castle** at **Camp Wawbeek**—enhancing the camper experience and positioning the program for continued growth in attendance. *Concept photo to left.*