

# Independence

Easterseals Wisconsin Newsletter  
Winter/Spring 2026

## Centennial Celebration!

Easterseals Wisconsin proudly marks our 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 our history, Easterseals Wisconsin has adapted and expanded our services to reflect the needs of the communities we serve. 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 our 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 our 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 our centennial celebrations, or how to get involved or donate, visit [www.eastersealswisconsin.com](http://www.eastersealswisconsin.com) or contact Rachel Reichhoff, Director of Development, at [reichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:reichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com)

## Support & Shop Our Centennial Collection Today!



Celebrate 100 years of Easterseals Wisconsin with our limited-edition centennial merchandise fundraiser! This collection features a standout design created to honor a century of impact.

Know that with every purchase, you are supporting programs and services that help people with disabilities live full, independent lives.

This collection is available now at: [www.bonfire.com/store/esw-camp-store](http://www.bonfire.com/store/esw-camp-store) or scan the QR code above.

Introducing the

## Centennial Collection



THIS LIMITED-EDITION COLLECTION COMMEMORATES  
100 YEARS OF EASTERSEALS WISCONSIN

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## Easterseals Wisconsin News

## New Staff



**Teya Castillo** began as Director of Camp Wawbeek in February 2026. Her Easterseals journey started as a counselor at Easterseals Colorado in 2022, continuing in 2023 as the Adaptive Sports Specialist. That fall, Teya took the lead as their Program Manager until January 2026 before deciding to make the move to Wisconsin to serve as Director of Camp Wawbeek.



**Cassie Grassnickle** joined as the AmeriCorps Program Manager in October 2025, supporting service members in creating meaningful, experience-based learning opportunities at camp. She brings a passion for service learning and a commitment to community engagement. Cassie holds a degree in Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, and enjoys helping others grow through hands-on experiences, fostering personal and professional development.



**Jodi Weldy** joined Easterseals Wisconsin in September 2025 as Camp Nursing Coordinator. Jodi first worked at camp during the summer of 2021 as a Camp Nurse at Respite Camp, continuing for the last five summers before her latest role as Nursing Coordinator. She loves the atmosphere at camp and says it's a place where people can be themselves and just enjoy the company and friendship of others.

## New Board Members



**Jeremy Kluz** joins the board from Watertown. He attended UW-Eau Claire where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting. A licensed CPA for over 22 years, he has held various accounting and finance leadership positions throughout his career. Currently, he is the Chief Financial Officer at Neuman Pools, Inc., a longtime supporter and sponsor of Easterseals Wisconsin.



**Steve LeRoy** is Director, Sales at Delta Dental of Wisconsin, providing strategic leadership and oversight for the field sales organization, directing the planning, development, and execution of sales strategies that drive new business growth and market expansion. Steve joins the Board from Madison.



**Kade Mullett** is a Production Supervisor at Frito-Lay and is continuously looking to grow as an individual and be challenged. He joins the Board from Rock County.

## Recent Events • Recap

**Golf Fore FARM** · Held on August 8, this event once again brought together a great group of people for a day of fun in support of an important cause. S.D. Ellenbecker, Inc., County Materials, and Janke Contractors, Inc. demonstrated their continued commitment to supporting Wisconsin farmers living and working with disabilities. Despite the extreme heat, the turnout was excellent and the event helped raise **just over \$20,000**.



**Sporting Clays** · On October 3, Delta Dental proudly returned as the Presenting Sponsor of the Annual Sporting Clays event for the fifth year in a row. This unique event offers a fun and engaging alternative to traditional fundraising, connecting with a passionate group of avid sportsmen and -women. Thanks to their support and the enthusiasm of participants, the event raised **just over \$18,000**.



**Pancake Breakfast** · Held on October 5, the annual Pancake Breakfast welcomed a past camp staff reunion hosted by Ken Saville, along with many new faces. This event focuses on celebrating the community and showing appreciation for the continued support shown year after year, welcoming guests of all ages. It was truly a team effort, with both camp staff and the development team spending time in the kitchen and among happy breakfast eaters. While the event was not intended as a primary fundraiser, it still generated **just over \$6,000**. Events Coordinator Karen Boyle secured 100% of the food and beverage donations, helping make the event a success. The **Elks-Madison Auxiliary Lodge #410** was also on hand to present a check for \$2,500 to Camp Wawbeek.

**GivingTuesday** · GivingTuesday gave Board members the opportunity to share their advocacy for Easterseals Wisconsin with their networks and help raise several thousand dollars for the agency, with new Board member Jeremy Kluz leading the day as top fundraiser. Social media played an important role in spreading the word and engaging supporters. GivingTuesday invites everyone to participate — through time, talent, or financial support — showing that every contribution helps make a difference.



## Client Tribute - Tony Clark

It is with profound sadness that we share about the passing of former FARM Program client, Tony Clark. Tony had become a passionate advocate for the program and farmers facing extreme challenges due to a disabling accident or illness. He welcomed the chance to share about the impact of the program and encouraged others to seek assistance if in need.

He represented the FARM Program at this past year's Golf Fore FARM outing. We will be eternally grateful for his support and advocacy, knowing his words and testimony will leave a lasting impact.



# Generous Supporters Spotlight

**Men's Dorm Remodel** • In celebration of Easterseals Wisconsin's 100th anniversary, the three siblings behind the Rosemann Foundation (Gayle, Rachel and Jeffrey) have generously provided the funds to totally renovate the men's dorm at Camp Wawbeek. Their donation was made in memory of their brother, Wesley Rosemann, who was an enthusiastic camper in the 1950's.

This coming summer, the male campers will enjoy the benefits of new A/C, windows, flooring, wardrobes, safety railings, as well as fresh paint and a carpeted great room. With the help of the Kiwanis Club, the great room will also feature refinished shelving, new furniture, and two game tables. It will be a total makeover, creating an inviting stay and a "home away from home" for the male campers.

**Trillium Foundation** • Thanks to a grant from The Trillium Foundation, we're able to expand our programs serving veterans and their families through our Veterans Family Camp during spring and fall of 2026!

**Community Vision Fund** • Thank you to the *Community Vision Fund* within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region for funding the Easterseals Wisconsin Disability HelpLine's Inclusive Recreation Opportunities Speaker Series for 2026. We are truly appreciative for this funding! To learn more about the series, contact Beth Montour at 920.832.0344 or email [bmontour@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:bmontour@eastersealswisconsin.com).

**Wisconsin REALTORS Association** • The Wisconsin REALTORS® Foundation Board approved a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to support Easterseals Wisconsin during the 2026 summer camp season. Thank you to the association for their generous support and belief in our mission!

**Okray Foundation** • The Edward J. Okray Foundation is supporting the FARM Program with a \$5,000 gift toward services provided to farmers with disabilities living in north central Wisconsin.

**Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom** • We're grateful to be one of the recipients of the *Ag in ALL Classrooms* grant, supporting agricultural literacy across Wisconsin. This funding helps us bring hands-on, meaningful learning experiences to the students and families we serve through the Exploring Job Options in Rural Wisconsin Program. Thank you for investing in education and helping us grow understanding of agriculture in our communities!

**Green Bay Packers Foundation** • We're honored to share that Easterseals Wisconsin has received a grant from the Green Bay Packers Foundation! This support helps us with repairing our ropes course. Thank you to the Packers Foundation for investing in our community and helping us continue to make a difference!

# Upcoming Events

**Wonderfully Human • Thursday, March 12 • Garver Feed Mill • Madison**  
Join us at our 100-year celebration event! At Wonderfully Human, you'll have the opportunity to meet like-minded philanthropists and experience the mission of Easterseals Wisconsin by engaging with clients who benefit from these programs, Board members, and volunteer ambassadors. Tickets start at \$200 with various options available. Business attire suggested. Your RSVP by February 27 is appreciated. Cocktail Hour 5:00-6:00 pm • Dinner & Program 6:30-7:30 pm • Live entertainment by WheelHouse.

**Basketball Experience • Saturday, April 18 • Madison College • Madison**  
Join us for the 7th annual Easterseals Wisconsin Basketball Experience, presented by Affiliated Dentists. Cheer on former Badger athletes as they hit the hardwood in support of children and adults with disabilities. This FREE, family-friendly event includes pre-game basketball clinic, activities, games, prizes, photos with Bucky Badger, and much more! Tip-off is 3:00 pm.

**Golf Fore FARM • Friday, August 21 • Merrill Golf Club • Merrill**  
The Easterseals Wisconsin Golf Fore FARM Golf Outing (formerly known as the Skip Ellenbecker Memorial Golf Outing) benefits the Easterseals Wisconsin FARM Program. Each year, the program helps approximately 500 Wisconsin farmers remain in or return to farming after a disabling accident, illness, or medical condition.

*For event details, please visit our website or contact Karen Boyle by email at: [kboyle@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:kboyle@eastersealswisconsin.com).*



# Introducing Partners 4 Programs



Through thoughtful conversation with our longtime Presenting Sponsor, Bank of Wisconsin Dells, and major sponsors Wild Rock and Holiday Wholesale, Easterseals Wisconsin has made the decision to transition away from the physical Golf for Kids outing, traditionally held each June in Wisconsin Dells.

This decision was prompted by declining event attendance, even as financial support for the agency has continued to grow through generous sponsorships.

In place of the outing, we are excited to introduce a new way for sponsors to continue making an impact via **Partners 4 Programs**.

This newly-created opportunity offers sponsorship levels ranging from **\$1,250 to \$10,000**, each with a variety of benefits that highlight the best of the Wisconsin Dells area — golf, water parks, dining, and more.

Each sponsorship level also allows partners to choose which Easterseals Wisconsin program they would like to support, creating a more direct connection to the services and individuals they are helping. Sponsors will also have opportunities for program tours and meet-and-greets with clients and consumers, offering an even deeper look into the impact of their support.

If you are interested in learning more or becoming a partner of the new initiative, please contact Rachel Reichhoff, Director of Development, at 608.237.1370 or [reichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:reichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com).

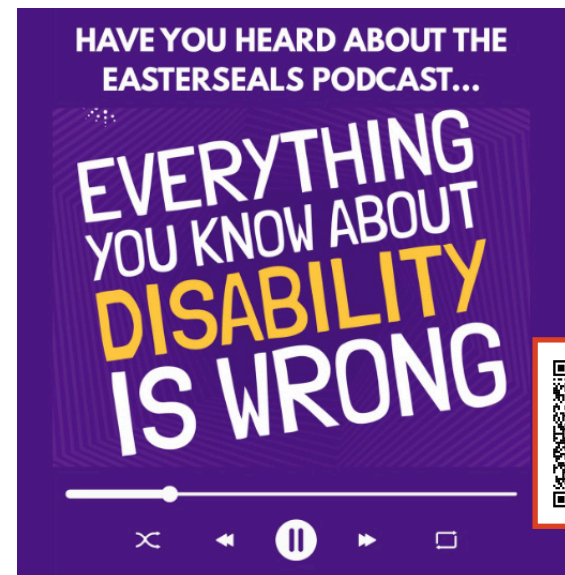
# Barn Talk Podcast

In honor of National Farm Safety and Health Week in September, FARM Program Director Jeff Kratochwill was featured on the national Barn Talk Podcast!

Jeff shared how farm safety, recovery, and support can make all the difference for farmers after accidents — reflecting on his own experiences — and how Easterseals Wisconsin can help.

Special thanks to the Barn Talk crew for the opportunity to bring awareness to our programs and services and recognizing all farmers' abilities.

You can find the episode wherever you listen to podcasts or visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdMScWNFicY&t=18s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdMScWNFicY&t=18s) or scan the QR code.



# Tune In to National Easterseals

National Easterseals hosts the "Everything You Know About Disability is Wrong" podcast, bringing honest, thoughtful conversations about disability with disabled leaders, advocates, and creators. Learn from real stories, challenge assumptions, and discover perspectives that go beyond stereotypes. Whether you're a part of the disability community or an ally, you'll walk away with something new!



Check out their most recent episode: "Dance Through It: The Story Behind 'Disabled' and a New Era of Disabled Joy" where Austin Halls explores music, face difference, and fashion. Visit [www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/podcasts/everything-you-know-about-disability-wrong-podcast](https://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/podcasts/everything-you-know-about-disability-wrong-podcast) or

scan the QR code above.

# Showcasing Camp Grounds at ACA Conference

The American Camp Association held its annual Fall Gathering at Camp Wawbeek this past fall. It was an honor to host them and a great way for us to showcase our beautiful camps in Wisconsin Dells. Fellow camp and youth development professionals had the opportunity to collaborate through top-notch education and networking. The conference featured workshops, camp tours, an interactive workshop, and educational breakout sessions.

Our camps are available for group rentals when regular camp sessions are not taking place. Please reach out to Amanda Verhagen at **608.237.1527** or email [averhagen@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:averhagen@eastersealswisconsin.com) if you have an interest in learning more about camp rental availability.



# Meet Mari McHenry!

Each year we are humbled to share client testimonials as they talk about their experience with Easterseals Wisconsin. One such testimonial is from Mari McHenry.

"We needed to figure out what path we needed to take to give her an opportunity that other kids have," says Mari's father, Chris. "Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp have provided those things, knowing we can take her there and that she's safe, she's going to be taken care of."



Scan the QR code or visit our YouTube channel to hear from Mari about why she can't wait to get back to camp and why her parents love it, too!

# Support Our Mission

*I would like to support Easterseals Wisconsin's mission to increase independence, maximize opportunities, minimize barriers, and enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities.*

### Please Print Clearly

\$100  \$250  \$500  \$1,000  Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Check enclosed

My company provides matching gifts

Please charge my Mastercard or Visa:

Expires: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

3-digit security code \_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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# Camp Reunion Inspires Legacy Gift

Recently, George Williams committed to financially supporting Camp Wawbeek through a unique and significant gift of stock worth more than \$200,000. His generosity is rooted in a lifelong personal and professional connection to the camp and its mission of enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities.

After serving in multiple staff roles at Camp Wawbeek during the late 1960s — where he met his wife of 45 years — George devoted his career to leadership roles in disability-focused camps, recreation programs, higher education, and public service, with several family members also contributing years of service, including at Camp Wawbeek.

His renewed support was inspired by a recent staff reunion and a deeper appreciation of the camp's lasting impact, as well as a desire to honor his late wife's enduring love for Camp Wawbeek and their family's shared legacy of service. Recognizing the camp's ongoing need for financial resources to sustain and expand its vital work, George views this gift as both an investment in Camp Wawbeek's future and a meaningful tribute to the experiences and people that shaped his life.

If you'd like to explore ways to support Easterseals Wisconsin, please connect with Rachel Reichhoff, Director of Development or by phone 608.237.1370 or [rreichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com](mailto:rreichhoff@eastersealswisconsin.com) to start the conversation.

