



271 East First Street  
Corning, NY 14830  
(607) 962-8225  
(607) 937-5125 (Fax)  
(607) 936-9129 (Sorenson Video)  
Or 711 Relay to (866) 440-4625 to AIM

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Sabrina Mineo-O'Connell, President  
George Spisack, Vice President  
Barbara Squires, Treasurer  
Rick Johns, Secretary

Mary Ann Starbuck  
Kelli Mannon  
Deborah Eagen  
Paula Gore

René L. Snyder  
Executive Director

### ***For immediate release***

**Contact: John Zick, governmental and public affairs coordinator**

**Contact info: (607) 962-8225, ext. 116; [jzick@aimcil.com](mailto:jzick@aimcil.com)**

## **AIM employee wins The Advocacy Center's Founders Award**

ELMIRA | AIM Independent Living Center transitions advocate Wendy Watkins has been named the winner of The Advocacy Center's annual Founders Award for disability advocacy.

The Advocacy Center selected Watkins as its Founders Award recipient because she "exemplifies our founders' commitment through (her) efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities," said Rick Wright, the chairman of organization's Community Awards Committee.

The Founders Award, which is one of six community awards given by the Rochester-based organization, is reserved for a parent or family member of an individual with a disability. Watkins' sister was born with Down syndrome, and her adult daughter has a disability.

"Wendy has had many challenges in her life, but she believes it has made her an even stronger advocate," said Joyce Simons, who nominated Watkins for the award. "Wendy still continues to advocate for her daughter in regards to doctors, residential staff and other people, in the hopes they gain a better understanding of her daughter and who she is."

Watkins, who has worked in the human-services field for more than 20 years, said: "I am honored to accept The Advocacy Center's Founders Award on the behalf of my girl, Lisa; and the parents, individuals and advocates who I have had the remarkable pleasure of working with through the years. Through their life experiences, strength and devotion for their loved ones, I have gained the knowledge and compassion to strive for improved services and supports for those who are differently-abled."

Watkins will be presented with her award at The Advocacy Center's Celebration of Champions event Oct. 5 in Rochester.

-30-

**AIM Independent Living Center**, more commonly known as **AIM**, is a non-profit organization dedicated to people with disabilities, their families, friends, the businesses that serve them, and those with an interest in disabilities.

- Advocacy
- ADA Consultation
- CDPAS Home Attendant Services
- Deaf Services and Support Group
- Facilitated Enrollment
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Information and Referral
- Job Coaching
- Supportive Employment
- NHTD Waiver Services
- Peer Advocacy & Support Group
- OPWDD Consolidated Supports & Services
- OPWDD Family Supports & Services
- OPWDD Financial Management Services
- OPWDD Medicaid Service Coordination
- Recreation/Leisure Activities
- Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired
- Social Security & Benefits Advisement
- Assistive Technology Loan Program
- Transition Services to Young Adults
- Training & Disability Awareness
- TBI Waiver Services

---

**AIM-CHEMUNG  
Independent Living Center**  
650 Baldwin Street  
Elmira, NY 14901

**AIM OUTREACH OFFICES**  
117 East Steuben Street  
Bath, NY 14810

370 Sawyer Street, Bldg 3  
Hornell, NY 14843

84 Schuyler Street  
Belmont, NY 14813

323 Owego Street  
Montour Falls, NY 14865

***AIM Independent Living Center is missioned to support an individual's ability to make independent choices through education, advocacy, information and referral.***