

# NAZARETH COLLEGE

School of Health and Human Services

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July 21, 2022

Dear Monroe County Leaders:

I am writing to enthusiastically support awarding funding to Mary Cariola Center, which would allow them to expand incredibly important workforce development opportunities for those critical staff members who support individuals with complex disabilities. Mary Cariola Center has been a trusted provider for children and young adults with multiple and complex medical and behavioral challenges for over 70 years. The agency is well known for creativity and innovation in serving individuals who cannot be served in public schools and other settings.

Mary Cariola Center has served as a practicum site for decades and has hosted many, many students in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, music therapy, and social work from Nazareth College's School of Health & Human Services over the years. The Center has been an area leader in interprofessional practice and has worked with Nazareth to advance our graduates' ability to collaborate across professions to improve outcomes for the individuals we serve.

Creating a pathway for Center employees with a commitment to this population to enroll in educational programs to prepare for urgently-needed professions – to enable the Center to “grow their own” – is a creative and productive solution to workforce gaps. Nazareth College is pleased to collaborate to address this community need.

We are very much in support of Mary Cariola expanding the Agency's capacity to support Monroe County in growing the skilled workforce to provide services to individuals with multiple and complex disabilities. Mary Cariola's innovation and expertise is a great asset to Monroe County residents and provides them the foundation to be successful in this initiative.

Sincerely,

*Cathy Rasmussen*

Cathy Rasmussen, PhD, CCC-SLP  
Interim Dean