



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO JOINS FOUNDER TO CELEBRATE 35 YEARS OF STARLIGHT PEDIATRICS

Starlight Pediatrics provides high-quality, consistent care for more than 500 children in the foster system each year

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello celebrated the 35th anniversary of Starlight Pediatrics today, with the organization's founder, Dr. Moira Szilagyi. Starlight Pediatrics began in 1990 as the Monroe County Foster Care Pediatric Clinic, with the vision of offering trauma-informed, centralized medical care for children in foster care. In 2011, The Sands Family donated \$1 million to complete the current building on the Monroe Community Hospital campus that houses the practice.

"Starlight Pediatrics was one of the first clinics in the nation to provide children in the foster care system with healthcare that sees them fully – body, mind, and spirit," **said County Executive Bello**. "The vision that Dr. Moira Szilagyi brought to Monroe County continues to be carried out by a dedicated team of caregivers who offer consistency, dignity, and healing to children who often don't have stability in other areas of their lives."

"It is our privilege to care for these children with the compassion, respect and consistency they need to heal from their past traumas. Children in foster care often face complex physical, mental, and behavioral health needs and benefit from consistent, trauma-informed care," **said Dr. Marielena Vélez de Brown, Commissioner of Public Health**. "I thank County Executive Bello for his support, our partners in the Child Protective Services division of the Department of Human Services, our nurse practitioners and clinic staff, as well as all the people and community organizations who help make this work possible. I especially thank Dr. Szilagyi for her vision and the foundational work that Starlight stands upon today as a national model for providing primary medical care to children involved in CPS."

"Starlight Pediatrics was developed as a joint effort between the Monroe County Departments of Social Services and Public Health to improve the health care and outcomes of children in foster care in Monroe County," **said Dr. Moira Szilagyi**. "It is a concrete, visual representation of their commitment to improving the health care and outcomes for children and teens in foster care. I am so proud to wish Starlight Pediatrics and all who made it possible a very Happy 35th Anniversary."

Starlight Pediatrics has become a model for high quality, trauma informed health and mental health services for children in foster care and has inspired national health guidelines and federal legislation. The *American Academy of Pediatrics* has declared that children in foster care are “children with special health care needs” due to their high rates of physical and mental health struggles. When children experience more adverse childhood experiences, they are at an increased risk for long-term and lifelong medical issues, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, respiratory diseases, diabetes, depression, and other conditions.

Dr. Moira Szilagyi, formerly on the faculty of the University of Rochester Medical Center/Golisano Children’s Hospital, went on to lead the American Academy of Pediatrics and is currently on the faculty of the University of California Los Angeles/Mattel Children’s Hospital.

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