



Annual Campaign 2018

Dear Friends of Ohio SIBS,

I am proud to announce that we ... Terry and Neil Ryan ... are the honorary chairs for the 2018 Ohio SIBS Annual Campaign. We're two of six siblings who grew up together in Troy, NY. When Neil was about five years old, our family doctor told my parents he had cognitive issues and would be a slow learner (common language in those days). Why did we agree to do this? Like many siblings, we depend on the support of others who are part of the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community.

Neil's five siblings did well in school, while Neil struggled with academics and often repeated a grade. Because his teachers were supportive and worked diligently he learned to read, write and do some math. However, he was often socially isolated because he just didn't "fit in". He was "bullied" at times. Unfortunately, that wasn't an issue that was addressed in the 50's.

The good news is that Neil has a large and loving family. Five caring siblings made sure that he had a social support structure. Our parents were dedicated to helping Neil and made sure that we understood our sibling responsibilities.

As the rest of us grew into adulthood and went on to college, Neil got a job cleaning in the local public school. The very fine woman who had been the Principal for all of us gave Neil this first chance to be employed and experience this success. That first opportunity eventually led to full-time employment as a Custodial Aid in the Troy Public School System. He worked there for 35 years and never missed a day of work or was late. CONGRATULATIONS, NEIL!

Our family journey will sound familiar to many of you. As his five siblings moved on to college, marriage and extended families, Neil remained at home with Mom and Dad. After Dad passed away, Neil and Mom became best friends. As Mom aged, Neil became her support agent, living with her until her passing. Neil lived another five years in the family home. CONGRATULATIONS, MOM AND DAD!

I have lived my entire life identifying as a sibling and a family member to Neil. He has spent many extended visits in Ohio with my part of the Ryan family. I cherish these times that we spend with him. Neil has helped me become a more understanding person and one who values each life.

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I'm passionate about sibling issues, assuring sibling connections and improving on the information available to siblings and other family members. Because individuals with IDD are living longer, an increasing number of brothers and sisters are being called on to be more involved in the lives of their siblings with disabilities. Because of my involvement with Ohio SIBS and other organizations in the IDD community, I have met hundreds of siblings, many who are their brother or sister's key support. Most siblings will be in the lives of their brothers or sisters longer than anyone else.

Ohio SIBS has just concluded its 17th Annual Conference, "Reaching for Benefits, Rights and Resources". We are delighted that Ohio SIBS decided to launch an annual sponsorship campaign, "Reaching Out", to raise funds to support its ability to continue to be a unified voice and partner for Ohio's adult siblings of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families. Ohio SIBS has been offering advocacy, education, leadership, connection and support since 2001 and has been organized as a charitable organization in Ohio since 2010.

Please help to expand Ohio SIBS' reach by committing a gift toward this campaign. Gifts of any amount are welcomed and appreciated. Suggested giving levels for the "Reaching Out" 2018 Campaign include:

Platinum: \$750 • Gold: \$500 • Silver: \$250

The goal is ambitious ... \$30,000, but critical. Ohio SIBS has only part-time staff and few administrative resources. Your support is crucial. Ohio SIBS is a 501(c)3 (charitable) organization, so your support is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. We are grateful for all who supported our first Annual Campaign, last year, and look forward to being able to count more of you as supporters of this second Annual Campaign.

Sincerely,

Terry Ryan

Terry Ryan

Neil Ryan

Neil Ryan

