

BY: Senator DEFRANCISCO

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of Aurora of Central New York, to be celebrated May 18, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the custom of the State of New York to proudly recognize and commend those established organizations within our communities that, year after year, diligently work to improve the quality of life of our citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Aurora of Central New York, to be celebrated at the "A Music Feast for the Eyes and Ears" event on Thursday, May 18, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Aurora of Central New York was created as the Syracuse Association of Workers for the Blind in January of 1917, by a small group of concerned citizens that was led by John C. Fowler, a successful businessman who was blind; and

WHEREAS, Aurora of Central New York was founded on the principles that people who are blind are competent and capable to make their own living, but need certain opportunities to reach their life goals; and

WHEREAS, By 1918, a self-supporting work shop was established at 269 James Street in Syracuse, where furniture work was completed by the blind; the shop soon became known as The Lighthouse; and

WHEREAS, During the 1920s, The Lighthouse expanded its mission to provide employment and social opportunities for anyone in the community who was blind or visually impaired; and

WHEREAS, Then in 1926, The Lighthouse began receiving funds for expansion through what was then called the Community Chest, and in the years that followed, the organization grew and thrived while providing hundreds of people with work; and

WHEREAS, As a result of changing community attitudes, the workshop eventually merged with two other workshops to form the Consolidated Industries of Greater Syracuse, and its social programs combined with the Salvation Army's Golden Age Center; and

WHEREAS, In the mid-1970s, a community study was conducted to identify the needs of members of the community who were deaf; as a result, the Central New York Association of the Hearing Impaired (CNYAHI) was established as a sister agency to The Lighthouse; and

WHEREAS, In 1991, Aurora of Central New York was formed as a merger among Syracuse Association of Workers for the Blind, The Lighthouse, and the CNYAHI; and

WHEREAS, Today, under the able leadership of Executive Director Debra Chaiken, Aurora of Central New York serves an average of 1,000 individuals per year and continues to expand its programs to include people of all ages who are hard of hearing and visually impaired; and

WHEREAS, Aurora of Central New York's services include social work, employment services, orientation and mobility instruction, rehabilitation teaching, adaptive technology evaluation and training, low vision services, children's instructional services, sign language instruction, as well as professional Sign Language Interpreting through the Marjorie Clere Interpreter Referral Services; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Aurora of Central New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Debra Chaiken, Executive Director, Aurora of Central New York.