

BY: Senator BROUK

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of Mary Cariola Center

WHEREAS, Individuals and organizations devoted to improving the quality of life for others, enabling them to build lives of dignity and self-worth are deserving of the highest praise and recognition; and

WHEREAS, From time to time, society calls upon these individuals and organizations to be recognized for the significance of their contributions and efforts to assist others in developing the skills necessary to be successful, productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Mary Cariola Center; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cariola Center has a rich tradition of providing innovative programs to individuals with complex disabilities through personalized, interdisciplinary, evidence-based education and life skill solutions which inspire and empower them and their families; and

WHEREAS, Born in 1896, Mary Cariola and her family moved to an Italian-American community in Rochester when she was a child; as a teenager, she served as an interpreter and advocate for her immigrant neighbors who had difficulty communicating in their new culture; this was just the beginning of her fight for other people's rights; and

WHEREAS, Later, Mary Cariola worked as a deputy employment certification officer for the Rochester Board of Education, and then as a caseworker for the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to children, where she observed the hardships of discrimination, poverty, and unacceptable treatment of children; and

WHEREAS, In the 1940s, children with disabilities were often placed in institutions; Mary Cariola's nephew, Butchie, was born with severe developmental and physical disabilities, and she could not imagine him being institutionalized; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cariola took the initiative and joined forces with six other families and business leaders, to raise the necessary funds, and founded The Day Care Center for Handicapped Children, designed to provide social, recreational and vocational experiences for children not eligible for public school, within the limits of their capacity; the Center opened in 1949 with eight students; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, the Center was renamed Mary Cariola Center, 10 years before her death, to honor her dedication to offering the highest quality innovative educational programs and small group homes for individuals with complex disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cariola Center was the first in the nation to open a group home for children and youth with significant behavior management needs, and the first to offer a sensory room which uses special lighting, music, and objects as a therapy for children with limited communication skills; and

WHEREAS, Today, Mary Cariola Center serves more than 450 students ages 3-21 in three school campuses, as well as nearly 50 residents in six residential homes; each day, students travel from over 50 referring school districts from 11 surrounding counties in addition to Buffalo, Syracuse, and Niagara Falls; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cariola Center School is recognized statewide for innovative instructional strategies, design and construction of therapeutic equipment and educational programs for children and youth with complex cognitive, medical, social, and behavioral needs; and

WHEREAS, The residential program provides 24-hour care in a family setting to individuals with multiple disabilities and behavior management needs; the program's six residential facilities located throughout Monroe County focus on life skill development and assisting individuals in experiencing all that life and their communities have to offer; and

WHEREAS, The success of Mary Cariola Center is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated teachers, aides, and clinicians, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those organizations which unselfishly devote their energy, talent and thoughtful care on behalf of improving the quality and dignity of life in the community, are worthy and due full praise and recognition for their noble and dedicated efforts; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Mary Cariola Center; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Mary Cariola Center.