

BY: Senator HELMING

COMMEMORATING the 70th Anniversary of Mary Cariola
Children's Center on May 9, 2019

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in this great Empire State is greatly enriched by the faithful and diligent work of those organizations which serve to meet the special needs of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Mary Cariola Children's Center, to be celebrated with an event on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at The Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York; and

WHEREAS, For seven decades, Mary Cariola Children's Center has served people 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 Children's 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 Children's 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 used as a therapy for children with limited communication skills; and

WHEREAS, Today, Mary Cariola Children's Center serves over 450 individuals in both preschool and school age programs on two school campuses; students come from 53 different school districts and 11 counties; and

WHEREAS, Students and families are offered numerous services including nursing; OT/PT; behavior, music, Snoezelen, vision and speech therapies; Telemedicine; assistive technology, psychological, psychiatric, neurology and nutrition consults; adapted physical education; transition programs, social work, Dental Desensitization, and UPMC Development and Behavioral Pediatrics; and

WHEREAS, The residential program provides 24-hour care in a family setting to small groups of children and youth with multiple disabilities and behavior management needs; the program's six residential facilities located throughout Monroe County serve 44 residents, with six to nine in each home; and

WHEREAS, The success of Mary Cariola Children's Center is in direct correlation to the efforts of its staff, 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 institution and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom 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 70th Anniversary of the Mary Cariola Children's Center on May 9, 2019; and be it further

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