

Ron Kenny: Providing life without limits for people with disabilities at UCP Seguin

UCP SEGUIN

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As a husband, father, accomplished businessman and community advocate, Ron Kenny exemplifies what it means to be a selfless leader. Throughout years of service, Ron has brought generosity, business acumen and compassion to his charitable pursuits. In his hometown and beyond, Ron's giving nature and commitment to his community do not go unnoticed.

Ron served on the board at UCP Seguin for 21 years of service, last serving as board secretary before retiring board duties last year.

A graduate of University of Illinois Chicago, and a certified CPA, Ron began his career in finance in the audit divisions of Ernst & Young and Grant Thornton. Eventually, Ron moved into a consulting role at Huizenga Capital Management, where he has worked for over 30 years. Ron married his high school sweetheart, Nancy, and they started a family together in Lisle. Having grown up in the Chicagoland area, Ron has always given back to his local community. He was first introduced to Seguin Services in 1998, prior to its merger with United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago. Even at the time, he could tell that the organization was something special.

"I remember talking it over with Nancy, and we determined that this was an incredibly worthwhile cause — it was something I hadn't done before, and we knew it would be a fulfilling experience," Ron said.

Ron immediately began to serve on the Seguin Board — his first nonprofit board — and continued to be a dedicated member during and after the 2013 merger. He served on the Finance Committee for the duration of his 21-year Board membership, and also as Board Secretary for six years before stepping down in 2019.

"I've been very happy to make any contributions I could for the betterment of the people that UCP Seguin serves," Ron said. "This experience has been so unique, and I feel extraordinarily lucky."

With a wealth of knowledge from his successful financial career, Ron was eager to bring his expertise to the Finance Committee following the merger to assist the newly formed UCP Seguin in its growth and development. Ron's measured demeanor encouraged caution when needed while helping UCP Seguin seize the right opportunities to help expand its reach and



Ron and Nancy Kenny proudly display the watercolor painting of the Kenny House. The Kenny House is home to four adult with disabilities and is located in Naperville.

scope.

Under Ron's leadership, the Finance Committee became a robust, highly functioning foundation for UCP Seguin to bring its services to individuals across the Chicagoland area. "We wanted to provide both stability and growth by strengthening financial practices in the organization. I'm proud to say it's night and day — the professionalism, the skill set, the analysis — everything went off the charts relative to where we started from," Ron said.

In addition to his individual service, Ron has also recruited countless community members to join him in donating their time and dollars toward improving the lives of people with disabilities. Notably, Ron facilitated a partnership between UCP Seguin and his employer, Huizenga Capital Management, to manage and cultivate agency resources. Ron and Nancy have acted as UCP Seguin's 'Holiday Angels' over many years, asking those

they know to support UCP Seguin during the holiday season and generating additional donations from all around the Chicagoland area. In recognition of the Kenny family's philanthropic contributions and Ron's dedicated service as a Board Member, UCP Seguin presented him with the "Life Without Limits" Award in 2014. Ron has worked hard to spread UCP Seguin's message and advocate for its participants — but he feels it's the easiest sell ever.

"I always encourage people to come out and visit some of the homes and participate in the programs. I think if people make that first time commitment, then they're hooked," Ron said. "Once people understand the remarkable difference that UCP Seguin is making in people's lives, they want to be involved."

To Ron, the most important part of UCP Seguin is providing ample opportunity for people with disabilities to have the most independent, fulfilling



John Voit, President/CEO presents Ron Kenny with the "Life Without Limits" Award for his dedication and service to those served at UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago.

lives they can. A particular service that he holds dear is the Seguin Gardens & Gifts Center, where among other tasks, UCP Seguin participants of all abilities help to nurture the plants.

"Seeing the people we serve plant seedlings has been one of my favorite memories throughout my time with UCP Seguin," Ron said. "Watching the care and pride they take to grow something from a seed — it's incredibly inspiring."

In honor of Ron's selflessness and advocacy, a UCP Seguin home located in Naperville was dedicated in his name in 2019. The house is currently home to four adults with disabilities, and allows them to live as independently as possible while being involved in the community. The Kenny House serves as a testament to the incredible legacy of service that Ron and his family have provided to UCP Seguin. Ron Kenny has continually championed UCP Seguin's mission to create life without limits for individuals with disabilities — he embodies what it means to be generous in every aspect of life.

"I am extraordinarily humbled to help people who can't help themselves as much as they would like, and to provide some level of assistance in their lives," Ron said. "It has truly been my honor to be a part of this organization."

ABOUT UCP SEGUIN

UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to enriching the lives of people with disabilities. UCP Seguin helps children and adults with disabilities achieve their potential, advance their independence and act as full members of the community. You can make a donation to UCP Seguin by visiting their website: ucpsguin.org.